

Cornelia Isler-Kerényi

Civilizing Violence

Satyrs on 6th-Century Greek Vases



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CONTENTS

Preamble	VII
by Othmar Keel	
Preface	XI
Introduction: Why speak about satyrs today ?	1
1 The first satyrs	7
- A Protocorinthian precursor	9
- The first violent satyrs of Attic vase painting	11
- The first domesticated satyrs	15
2 Satyrs and Hephaistos: The François vase	19
- Dionysos the peacemaker	20
- Hephaistos and Solon	22
- The satyrs	24
3 Satyrs and dancers	27
- Corinthian	27
- Examples from Boeotia	28
- Examples from Attica	31
4 Satyrs and the epiphanies of Dionysos	35
- The <i>thiasoi</i> of Lydos	36
- Satyrs and brides in the <i>thiasos</i>	40
- The satyrs between Dionysos and men	43
5 The satyrs and the mule rider	47
- The mule ride: myth or ritual ?	48
- The mule ride by Lydos	51
- Satyrs and Dionysian dancers in the mule ride	56
- From <i>komos</i> to <i>thiasos</i>	59
- Who are the satyrs ?	61

5 Satyrs in the vineyard of Dionysos	63
- <i>Thiasoi</i> and satyrs by the Amasis Painter	63
- Wine making	67
- The vine, mother of wine	70
- The vine between death and <i>apotheosis</i>	74
- The vineyard of Dionysos	75
- The images and the rites	79
6 Satyrs on vases and on the stage	83
- Satyrs in red-figured vase painting	84
- The satyrs of Satyr Plays	90
- Diversity	93
- Conclusion	94
Shapes of vases	97
Figures	99
Abbreviations	101
Works cited	103
Indices	113
- Vases in museums	113
- Vases according to Beazley's lists	115
- General	118

PREAMBLE

by Othmar Keel

Is it not strange to publish a book about Greek satyrs in the series *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*?

Methodological reasons

From its beginnings in 1973, the OBO series has always been interested in iconography and problems of its interpretation. This has been particularly true when dealing with iconography without contemporary texts, or at least without contemporary texts mentioning the dominant subjects in the visual arts. The satyrs represented on Greek painted pottery are such a case. Not just the satyrs, but the unique phenomenon of Greek figured pottery in general is hardly ever mentioned in literary works composed at the time when this pottery was produced, although this „pottery has been found in the tombs of Greeks and non-Greeks ... as well as in sacred areas and residential zones“, as Cornelia Isler-Kerényi says. The absence of texts creates a methodological problem which is of interest for anybody working in the field of Palestinian iconography. In contrast to Egypt and Mesopotamia, for much of the iconography from Palestine, particularly from the 2nd millennium BCE, there is a dearth of contemporary texts that are able to contribute to its understanding. Isler-Kerényi attacks this problem in respect to the representations of satyrs on Greek painted pottery of the 6th century BCE, avoiding in an exemplary way the facile procedure of trying to elucidate the ancient images with the help of much later texts. She completely avoids the trap of Erwin Panofsky's widely used system of a precipitous metabasis eis allo genos. On principle she does not switch to the field of literature after the identification and description of the motif. She stays instead in the pictorial domain and investigates the „vocabulary“, the syntax, and the composition of the elements. The results won by this procedure are then checked in the light of the preoccupations of the cultural realm from whence the images come, a procedure Panofsky called „iconology“ in contrast to the widely descriptive „iconography“ (for the problems and principles of this approach see Keel 1992: 267-273).

Material relevant for Palestine/Israel

However, publishing C. Isler-Kerényi's work in OBO is not only justified from the point of view of methodology. It is also justified by the material she uses and specially by her motif, the Dionysian satyr. Greek painted pottery reached Palestine not only in the Persian period but already during the preceding Iron Age. In the following period, from about 500 BCE on, half of the iconography of the imports is Dionysian in character. The reason for this may be equally the goods available and the interests of the buyers (Wenning 2000; id. 2004). Many Dionysian scenes remind of banquet scenes, and these were popular in the Near East since antiquity. Hellenistic authors interpreted certain elements of the Yahweh-cult, or the cult as such, as Dionysian. Plutarch compares the festive bunch of fruits and leaves of the feast of tabernacles with the Dionysian thyrsos and also considers the role of the wine and the bells on the dress of the high priest to be Dionysian features (*Quaestiones convivales* IV.6.1).

Satyrs and „the hairy ones“ of the Bible

Even the topic of C. Isler-Kerényi's study in the strictest sense, the satyr, seems to me to be of interest not only for the student of ancient Near Eastern culture and its relation to the Greek world, but also to the Old Testament scholar. Isler-Kerényi defines the satyr „as a human male with equine ears, a tail and some times hooves, who is often ithyphallic“. Looking at her many illustrations an additional element can be observed. Very often the Greek satyr is a conspicuously hairy being (Ill. 1, 3-5, 8 etc.). A comparable character in the Hebrew Bible is represented by the the sa'ir (sg.) or the se'irim (pl.) „the hairy one(s)“ respectively. One recalls that „hairy“ is used to describe Esau, the twinbrother of Jacob, whose skin was smooth (*Genesis* 27,11). It is said that already at the moment of his birth „all his body (was) like a hairy mantle“. Esau is then described as a hunter and a man of the wilderness. Esau is the only human being in the Bible characterized as „hairy“. Usually it is the billy-goat which is called sa'ir, the adjective used in this case as a noun. It is found 52 times (39 times in the singular, 13 times in plural), mainly in texts prescribing rituals (for ex. *Numbers* 7, 16-82; 29,5-25). In *Leviticus* 16 the famous billy-goat, the „scape goat“, „sent away into the wilderness to Azazel“ (vs. 10) is in Hebrew ha-sa'ir, „the hairy one“. In a limited number of passages the expression designates demoniac beings. Babylon which will become a desert will no longer be inhabited by a thriving human community.

„But wild animals will lie down there, and its houses will be full of howling creatures;

*there ostriches will live, and there goatdemons (se'irim) will dance.
Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces.“
(Isaiah 13, 21f).*

A similar picture is drawn of Edom transformed into a wilderness in Isaiah 34, 13f.

*„It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches,
Wildcats shall meet with hyenas, goat-demons shall call to each
other;
there too Lilit shall repose, and find a place to rest.“*

Although in principal they are animals, in these two cases the se'irim behave like humans, dancing and calling to each other. As satyrs they seem to be half human, half animal and they appear in groups. The further development of the satyrs and the hairy-ones is quite different. While the satyrs are tamed and appear as integral part of the Dionysian cosmos as it fits a polytheistic approach, the se'irim become more and more diabolic. In Leviticus 17, 7 and 2 Chronicles 11, 5 they are considered to be demons on the way to becoming diabolic beings. The basic crux of monotheism is the integration of evil. An easy outlet is to postulate the existence of forces which are quite independent of God, who ceases then to be completely almighty, and which are responsible for all the evil in the world. If this outlet is used with some consequence it destroys the ability of monotheism to understand the world as a coherent system and the result is dualism. The demonization of the se'irim is one step in the direction of dualism, which has always been a threat to monotheism (Keel 2003).

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PREFACE

This book is a sort of „satellite“ to my previous work on Dionysian iconography in 6th century Greece, *Dionysos nella Grecia arcaica. Il contributo delle immagini*. It looks different mainly because the illustrations consist not of photographs, but drawings. Being a „satellite“ or companion piece this book is essentially based on the same material as the previous one and therefore utilizes the same images. My aim in using drawings is to put illustration to the foreground: to help the reader follow my argument, which is conceived as a “discourse through the medium of images”.

I am very grateful to many colleagues for their stimulating discussions following the lectures on satyrs held in the past years in Switzerland, Italy, Paris and Denmark. Many thanks especially to Pierre Voelke (Lausanne) who made his important book *Un théâtre de la marge* available to me, to Martine Denoyelle (Paris) for new photographs of the Louvre Amphora E 860, the originals of Fig.29, to Vinzenz Brinkmann (Munich), and, for conversations on the topic, to Fritz Graf (Worthington OH), François Lissarrague (Paris), Nanno Marinatos (Chicago) and Richard Seaford (Exeter). I am bound in gratitude to the Cassinelli-Vogel-Stiftung in Zurich for sponsoring the translation of my text from Italian into English as well as to Professor Othmar Keel and Professor Christoph Uehlinger for including my text in the OBO-Series.

The contribution of Silvia Hertig (Archaeological Institute of the University of Zurich) and of my dear friend Marianne Karabelnik was crucial for this book to be completed.

INTRODUCTION

WHY SPEAK ABOUT SATYRS TODAY?

Greek figured pottery is a unique phenomenon in the history of civilizations. When, where and, especially, why were so many vases created with such care, utilizing the poorest of all raw materials: clay? It is not easy to answer this question, which frequently enters the minds of visitors to museums and exhibitions of classical art. Ancient literary works written at the time when this pottery was manufactured hardly mention these vases at all. Therefore, scholars must search for a relationship between the pottery and the way in which vessels were used. Thanks to archaeology the function of vases is known: pottery has been found in the tombs of Greeks and non-Greeks throughout the Mediterranean as well as in sacred areas and residential zones. These vases accompanied men and women on their journey through life and death, in both the public and private realms. Although pottery was utilized by everyone, it is presumed to have been highly regarded.

The main attraction of this pottery was its figural decoration: one of the most common subjects was Dionysos, the god of wine. This should not be surprising if we consider that figured pottery of the archaic and classical periods served especially in *symposia*: semi-private events or gatherings of citizens during which wine was consumed. But these were also occasions for people to converse, discuss current problems affecting the community, and enjoy themselves, reciting poetry, singing and making love.¹ Dionysos was particularly active in the life, thought and imagination of the participants of *symposia* and, thus, is a special intermediary for understanding their civilization. It is no coincidence that of all the divine personalities of the Greek *pantheon*, the god of the *symposion* should be of particular interest to students of the ancient world. Scholars have discussed issues surrounding Dionysos uninterruptedly over the course of more than two centuries, albeit not without controversy.² Given the wealth and continuity of archaeological evidence for the historical phases that precede most written sources which mention Dionysos, the contribution by archaeologists to this dialogue is crucial.

Building upon this tradition and after many years of study, my interest in Dionysos led to a monograph focusing upon the image that the

¹ ROSSI 1983; MURRAY 1990; MURRAY 2003.

² ISLER-KERÉNYI 2001a.

painters of Greek figured pottery gave to this deity in the archaic period.³ The present study frequently refers to the results of that iconographic analysis. But by the time I had finished presenting a plausible and coherent interpretation of Dionysos for that book, I had not yet fully gained a sense of the figure who appears most often with this divinity: the satyr. In order to understand such a figure, one must bring it to focus on his own, always bearing the chronological and iconographic context of the images in mind.

The satyr can be defined as a human male with equine ears, a tail and sometimes hooves, who is often ithyphallic; he is one of the oldest and most common figures in the repertoire of archaic Greek painted pottery. It should be stated up front that the use of the term „silen“ is also justified, especially, as we shall see, in light of the François vase, which names this figure for the first time. Having to choose, and considering the fact that most scholars accept the two terms as equivalent⁴, the term „satyr“ is preferred because in the context of Greek theater „Silenus“ is a very specific character: the father of the satyrs who is portrayed as an old man. The more generic term „satyr“ comprises all the variants of this character in art and leaves more room for interpretation.

Despite the fact that he appears early and is one of the most common subjects among the figural repertoire of pottery, the satyr has often been held to be an outsider: a superfluous addition to the Dionysian repertoire brought about by historical circumstances.⁵ One of the reasons for this paradox probably lies in the fact that the ubiquity of the satyr on painted pottery is in full contrast with his almost complete absence from mythological tradition.⁶ References to satyrs in archaic poetry are extremely few and, when they occur, are very brief: a Homeric hymn considers *silenoi* to be the dancing partners of nymphs⁷, while a passage from Hesiod indicates that the satyrs are descendants of Doros and defines them as „good-for-nothings who do useless things“⁸. As scarce as these sources are, they demonstrate that the notion of satyrs or *silenoi* existed at a very early time: a fact, as we shall see, that is confirmed by figural art. As for the satyrs it is of prime importance to bear in mind what Brelich states about all mythological figures who come forward as

³ Dionysos 2001.

⁴ CONRAD 1997, 20 f.; Satyrspiel 6 f.

⁵ SEAFORD 1984, 6: „Even their association with Dionysos is not universal, and may not be very ancient...“; KNOBLAUCH 1997, 359 ff.; CONRAD 1997, 22.

⁶ PADGETT 2000, 43 f.

⁷ h. Hom. Ven. 262.

⁸ Hes. Fr. 123 Merkelbach/West.

groups: „...they are not human, while at the same time one would hesitate to define them truly divine“⁹.

A more profound and often unconscious reason why many scholars tend to exclude the satyr from the true Greek *pantheon* is that this character embodies unharnessed male sexuality in the most explicit and unequivocal manner, which has been deemed incompatible with religion, at least as it is intended in the Christian sense.¹⁰

But is it really possible that a casual addition springing from historical contingencies could have led to such a prominent place in the repertoire of painted pottery, were it not responding to an authentic need of consumers? This need was strong enough to have given life to a specific kind of theatrical event around 510 B.C.: the Satyr Play. Although they are so poorly documented in ancient literature, these events must certainly have had great importance in the life of the classical *polis*.¹¹

This study addresses two key problems: the imbalance between the strong presence of the satyr in the context of vase painting and the paucity of literary documentation, and the relationship between the satyr of figural art and the satyr of the Satyr Play, which first appeared some five generations later. These two issues lead to another question: who is the satyr and what was his connection with Dionysos?¹²

In order to understand this, we should not interpret the painted images in light of the more recent theatrical figures. Rather, we need to proceed in the opposite direction: first and foremost, to undertake a careful analysis of the most important images individually and within their series, always bearing in mind their chronology.¹³ In fact we consider painted representations, which in contrast to the written sources are not secondary transcriptions but originals, to be equivalent, if not more reliable sources than literature.

They are reliable if we heed careful attention to the particular character of the painted images: they were not intended to present what the original viewer – Greek or Etruscan – saw every day or on the stage or even what they had imagined when reading, or better still, listening to stories about the gods.

⁹ BRELICH 1958, 326 f. and especially 328 (translated from Italian): „In Latin literature Satyroi, Silenoi, Nymphai etc. are often defined *dii minores* or *plebs deorum*“.

¹⁰ On the reasons for this apparent incompatibility, rooted in the history of studies on ancient religions: ISLER-KERÉNYI 2001a.

¹¹ ROSSI 1991, 16 f.; Satyrspiel 34-39; VOELKE 2001, 408-412.

¹² This is essentially the question that concludes the study by HEDREEN 1992, 180.

¹³ On the problem of establishing the dates of vases and their relation with the historical reality, see Dionysos 2001, 224.

The images on Greek vases do not describe objective or episodic realities – not even when they render anatomical parts or other details very explicitly: the themes rarely reflect the quotidian life of the average citizen.¹⁴ The artistic genre itself, with its restricted figural repertoire and limited palette of essentially two colors (black and red), is not realistic. The intention of the images was – when their media, the vases, were used – to evoke figures who resided in the shared mental world of the original viewers. These figures appeared in stories, almost all of which are now lost, and presented the opportunity to reflect upon and discuss the past and the present state of the world. For example, in the case of an image of satyr who pursues a nymph, it would be senseless to try to reconstruct a specific mythological episode. The main intention of the vase painter was to emphasize the dangerous and conflicting nature of the satyr¹⁵ and prompt the participants of *symposia* to remember and recount stories about satyrs and, even, to compare themselves with satyrs.

The primary difficulty for those who ‘read’ images on Greek vases today, lies in the fact that the original meaning no longer springs automatically to mind. The mental associations induced by the images, originally obvious and familiar, have to be rediscovered, reconstructed and reposed today: a tiresome (as well as uncertain and questionable) process, like all reconstructions of bygone realities inevitably are. Perhaps uncertain and questionable, yet clearly not useless because they may serve – us and those who follow us – to understand the peculiarity of our present reality.

As previously mentioned, what follows is a continuation of the volume on Dionysos, but this study goes well beyond what was considered in the first book. The objective is to shed greater light upon the satyr as he was depicted by vase painters of the 6th and early 5th century, placing him whenever possible in relation with the historical and cultural vicissitudes of archaic society: especially at Athens which is better known than all other cities. Finally, this volume seeks to understand why the satyr was so important for both the ancient users of the vessels and for the spectators of Satyr Plays: important for them and, consequently, illuminating for us.

This study begins by ascertaining the essentially parallel existence of two contrasting manifestations of the satyr in the decades preceding the François vase, both of whom were marginalized in later iconography: the wild satyr who rapes nymphs and the domesticated satyr who participates in processions and bears wine containers. The François

¹⁴ Cité des images 5 (J.-P. Vernant).

¹⁵ Cfr. SEAFORD 1984, 7: „The satyr is an ambiguous creature...combining mischief with wisdom and animality with divinity.“

vase offers one of the few occasions in which satyrs can be observed in a mythological context (Chapter 2). It is suggested that the satyr, with his two contrasting personalities, reflects the notion that the elimination of violence is impossible, but that there are ways of integrating it beneficially in the *polis*, a concept that was typical of the age of Solon and easily imaginable as the subject of discussion during *symposia*. In the third chapter an analysis of a series of images from the same period or slightly later, and not only from Attica, leads to the hypothesis that in some Dionysian rituals satyrs can be identified with the spectators of the images: the citizens.

This is followed in chapter 4 by a close observation of significant examples of *thiasoi*, namely images in which satyrs are not presented in processions or in the pursuit of women, but dancing around Dionysos or following the mule rider (who is not always Hephaistos). What emerges is that the *thiasoi* represented on vases did not pertain exclusively to the mythological past, but were considered to be events of the present. In these events, which are assumed to be Dionysian rites, the specific role attributed to satyrs by vase painters which has gone hitherto unobserved is clear: they are privileged interlocutors of Dionysos as well as intermediaries between human beings and Dionysos. The *thiasos*, with or without the mule rider, was the occasion for the person who utilized the vessels to approach Dionysos by identifying himself with the satyr (Chapter 5).

Later, during the Peisistratid period around 540 B.C., we observe important novelties in the manner in which satyrs are depicted: we find them engaged in wine-making, climbing like monkeys on Dionysos's vines, surrounding the god who presents himself in the garb of the happy banqueter (Chapter 6). Satyrs had become intermediaries between humans and divine beings – both initiates and initiators – and also responsible for the bloody *metamorphosis* of grapes into wine and, thus, were indispensable agents in the transformation of the world from wilderness to civilization. A generation later, the satyrs in Satyr Plays enter the scene: in the concluding chapter 7 we will try to clarify the relationship between the satyrs living in the heroic past and those pertaining to the world of the users of the vases who, in the *thiasos*, witnessed Dionysos and made him visible to others.

During our voyage in the wake of the vase painters – following their „discourses through images“ – some depictions of satyrs, even some important ones, will remain partially obscure. The hope remains that future discoveries of currently missing elements and new approaches to the study of vase paintings will shed further light upon this subject.

1

THE FIRST SATYRS

The iconography of subjects depicted on figured pottery cannot be interpreted without considering their historical evolution. Therefore, we are faced with the problem – for satyrs and all other subjects – of identifying the earliest form, the precise moment of its initial appearance, as well as its narrative context. As we know, the iconography of Greek painted pottery did not evolve in a linear way in the first few centuries after 1000 B.C. The decorative repertoire on geometric vessels was limited for a long time and with few exceptions¹⁶ to „geometric“ elements. While such elements appear to us to have served a strictly ornamental function, in all probability these motifs bore a precise message for the users of the vessels.¹⁷ Only in the 8th century were certain animal figures adopted, while human subjects appeared no earlier than 750 B.C. The latter, however, were represented according to rigid iconic formulae that contained only essential visual information and placed within a limited range of contexts: dances, funerary processions, battles or hunting scenes. In the 7th century this rather meager repertoire, well-suited for the prevalently funerary function of the vases, was substituted by a new kind of decorative style conventionally called Orientalizing.

This term indicates a remarkable stylistic change, namely the introduction of new decorative elements in Greece from the artistic repertoires of the Near East. This phenomenon, together with the contemporaneous adoption of novel vessel shapes, is a reflection of the profound cultural changes that swept through society in numerous regions of Greece.¹⁸ This is not the proper place to discuss the details of this historical phase, which was almost certainly perceived as a moment of crisis by those who lived through it. But the fact that the characters who preceded the satyrs of the 6th century made their first appearance at this time is viewed as symptomatic.

The new orientalizing repertoire appeared on vessels whose dimensions and function were monumental as well as on very small containers. The monumental examples were generally of Protoattic or Cycladic production, while the latter were manufactured in Corinth and used to contain the famous perfumes that were traded throughout the Mediterranean. Human figures, now placed in mythological contexts, obviously

¹⁶ For example the Protogeometric pottery of Crete, see BOARDMAN 1998, 16.

¹⁷ HIMMELMANN-WILDSCHÜTZ 1968.

¹⁸ COLDSTREAM 1977; 358 ff.; SNODGRASS 1980.

appeared more often on large vases, while smaller vessels were normally decorated with formulaic animal friezes: rows or groups of wild animals, or even single animals, surrounded by rosettes and other vegetal motifs that evoked a natural environment quite foreign to the one inhabited by men. In fact, the only human figures that we sometimes encounter in this context, to whom we shall return later, are grotesque dancers whose appearance and manner of moving represent the antithesis of the citizen.¹⁹



Fig. 1

A prefiguration of the grotesque dancers are two strange figures located below one of the handles of a large, fragmented Protoattic *krater*, now lost, which probably dates between 670 and 660 B.C.²⁰ Both figures are bearded (i.e. males) and seem to be performing a symmetrical dance. Below the opposite handle is a single figure, distinguished from the other two by his monstrous face, hairy body and aggressive manner (*Fig. I*). These subjects cannot be precisely identified, but they may share certain affinities with 6th century Dionysian dancers as well as with the satyr. Just as the similarities between satyrs and dancers are analogous in later iconography, so are the differences: an animal-like appearance and aggressive behavior are, in fact, prerogatives of the satyr. The marginal position of these characters on the vase in relation to the principal scenes

¹⁹ Dionysos 2001, *passim*, but especially 41, 65-67 and 221 f.

²⁰ Formerly Berlin 31573: Dionysos 2001, 30 and 36 f. figs. 4-5.

is very suitable for the fluid nature of the dancers and satyrs, who oscillate between myth and reality.

A Protocorinthian precursor

A more secure forerunner of the satyr can be found within a Protocorinthian animal frieze. The vessel in question is an *aryballos* discovered in an inhumation burial at Brindisi dated somewhat later, around 650 B.C. (Fig.2). The tomb contained a wide range of funerary goods and the *aryballos* was clearly the most prestigious piece.²¹ The area of Brindisi was the site of an indigenous Messapic settlement where Greek pottery was not common and, therefore, must have been considered a sign of prestige.

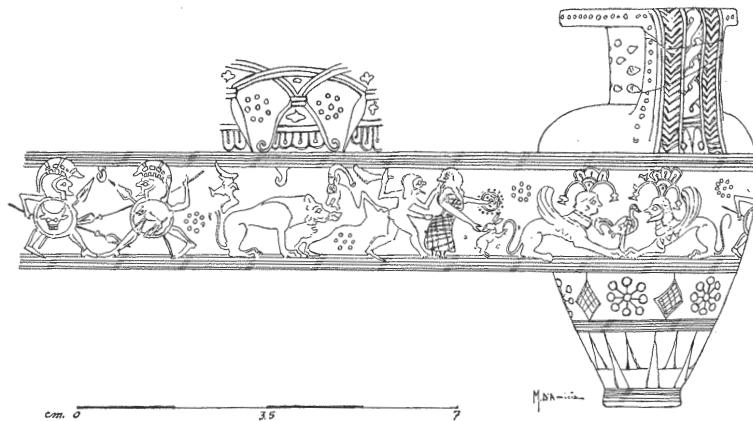


Fig. 2

Of particular interest is a scene in which a male figure assaults a female character from behind. Lo Porto was the first scholar to suggest that the aggressor may be a precursor of the satyr, well represented on Attic pottery of the first quarter of the 6th century B.C., despite the fact that he lacks important characteristics such as equine ears, a tail and clo-

²¹ Brindisi 1669: AMYX 1988, 333 and 659; Dionysos 2001, 31 and 38 fig. 7. For a detailed description and attribution to the Hunter Painter, see LO PORTO 1964, 120-125.

ven hoofs. However, no fewer than three features allow us to establish an iconographic link: the enormous phallus, the simultaneously aggressive and underhanded behavior of the male toward the woman and, lastly, the attributes of the latter – the crown in her hand and the leveret – that identify her as pertaining to both the realms of the wild and eroticism. The dimensions of the representation are minuscule: the *aryballos* itself measures only 7.3 cm, while the height of the figured frieze is a mere 2 cm. Naturally, this would have limited the vocabulary of the artisan from the outset.

This image is part of a frieze composed of four scenes. The first depicts duelling hoplites, which must have been the most important for the artisan. In fact, this scene occupies more space than the other three: the entire flank of the *aryballos*, namely the side that allows us to best identify the function of the juglet.²² Together with hunting scenes, battling hoplites are the most common motifs for this kind of *aryballos*²³ which, therefore, pertains more to the male than to the female realm. The concept of a struggle could not have been summarized in a more effective manner and is emphasized by the *episemata* of the two shields, considered, paradoxically, important enough to be equally visible. Both the taurine protome – who gazes at who gazes at it – and the dog readying itself to attack reinforce the dynamics of the encounter. The warriors are followed by a scene of aggression involving animals: a lion attacks a goat from behind. The assonance with the subject that is of greatest interest to us, is very clear: the ferocious lion corresponds to the ithyphallic male, while the inoffensive goat represents the defenseless woman and the young hare. The fourth scene illustrating a pair of sphinxes confronting each other is more enigmatic. They may have been intended to rouse fear, were it not for the crane standing between them, the bird perched upon the plume of the sphinx to the right, and, especially, the fact that the sphinx on the left allows the leveret to touch its tail: all elements that temper the bellicose theme of the frieze with a humorous note.

Is there a common denominator between these four episodes? The recurrent theme is the tension between two contenders despite their diverse settings: the battlefield and the wilderness. The outcome of the confrontation is also different: the woman, like the goat, is equated with the prey and the victim, but the assault is not immediately mortal.

The hostile or erotic tension of the image is reinforced by the *aryballos* itself, a container of scented essences that already conveys an aura of eroticism. This sense is heightened when we consider that the Greeks, particularly in the Archaic period, associated Eros with masculi-

²² LO PORTO 1964, plate 27a.

²³ Cfr. AMYX 1988, 24 ff. and plates 5 ff.

line and military excellence.²⁴ An erotic – and ironic – element may, thus, be contained in the motif of the confronting sphinxes who are, strangely, of different genders the one to the right being bearded.

We do not know of any direct successors of this proto-satyr on Transitional or Early Corinthian pottery in the second half of the 7th century. But we know how rare human representations are and how fluid the iconography is during this phase of figured pottery.²⁵ What is important to note is that the concept of male sexuality as a manifestation and a metaphor of violence was already taking shape at this early moment also outside of Athens.²⁶

The first violent satyrs of Attic vase painting

The concept expressed upon the Protocorinthian *aryballos* re-appears in Athens about three generations later, around 580 B.C., on a fragmentary black figured *dinos*.²⁷

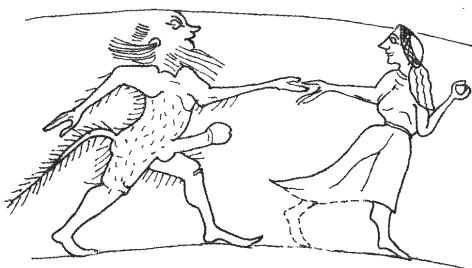


Fig. 3

The analogy between the two depictions is even more surprising when the viewer considers the profound diversity of the medium. Rather than a miniature vessel for individual or funerary use, we are faced with a monumental container found in the public heart of Athens, the *agorà*, that was used to mix symposiac wine with water and, hence, had a collective

²⁴ GREIFENHAGEN 1957, 62 f.

²⁵ Cfr. the analogous case of the possible precursors of grotesque dancers: SEE-BERG 1971, 2 ff.

²⁶ SEEBERG 1971, 4 states: „Silens emphatically were not strangers in Corinth during the period which concerns us...“.

²⁷ Athens, Agorà P 334: ADDENDA 7 (23); Dionysos 2001, 81 and 107 fig. 34.

function.²⁸ The style is also profoundly different compared to the 7th century Corinthian examples, reflecting the radical changes in the political and social conditions of the production of figured pottery.²⁹ As in the case of the *aryballos*, the scene that interests us was also one of several scenes within a frieze on the *dinos*, but, in this case, is more detached. There are only two figures: an ithyphallic male and a woman in flight (*Fig. 3*).

Like his Corinthian predecessor, this male subject has an enormous phallus and the aggressive behavior. Like the Attic satyrs that we shall encounter later, he has a monstrous face, a tail and a hairy body: a clear reference, as confirmed by a comparison with the participants in the Calydonian hunt represented in the same frieze, to a creature pertaining to the world of the wild. The same holds true for the female character, the victim of aggression. She wears the short dress of a nymph and attempts to defend herself with a round object, perhaps a stone, like the fantastic creatures of the aforementioned Protoattic *krater*; she seems to beg for clemency from her aggressor with her right hand. The episode takes place in an environment that is separate from the ritual scene to the left – inferred by the figure of a priest and a tripod – as well as from the mythological scene of the Calydonian hunt to the right.

The fact that it is positioned in correspondence with a break in the underlying animal frieze is not accidental, reminding us again of the marginal location of the Protoattic satyr.

The connection with the symposiac function of the vase will become clearer when dealing with the non-violent satyrs discussed later. This relationship is evidenced by the grotesque dancers who move around a large *krater* in the overlying frieze. Less explicit, but certainly present is the allusion to the *symposion* of the Calydonian hunt: a mythical example of the collective struggle against the realm of the wild and with it the metaphor of the *polis* which is self-represented in the *symposion*.³⁰

Even more important than the presence of humanoid forms in a repertoire still dominated by animal friezes, is the fact that this wild satyr is no longer isolated as he was at the time of the Protocorinthian *aryballos*.

In fact, another example is presented on a *lekythos* attributed to the manner of the Gorgon Painter, of a slightly more recent date – 580-

²⁸ Height (according to YOUNG 1935, 430 note 2, and 432 fig. 2): 19.5 cm.

²⁹ ISLER-KERÉNYI 1993, 3 f.

³⁰ LISSARRAGUE 1987a, 48: „Le symposion fonctionne souvent comme un espace politique dont il est une métaphore, …“; ISLER-KERÉNYI 1997b, 526 f.; SCHNAPP 1997, 309; FORNASIER 2001, 178.

570 B.C.³¹ Once again, we witness a case of sexual aggression involving two protagonists: a satyr and a nymph (*Fig. 4*). The satyr is depicted in an already canonical manner: monstrous face, equine ears, hairy body, erect phallus and animal tail. But this time, instead of chasing his prey on foot, he rides upon a galloping mule: an animal that, as we shall see, shares a particular affinity with the satyr and together with him forms an integral part of the Dionysian world. The aggressive nature of the episode could not be clearer, highlighted by the gaping mouth of the satyr, who is evidently shouting, and by the fact that the mule is biting the nymph's arm. The latter, dressed in a garment that leaves one leg exposed, is surprised from behind like her previously described companions and flees to the right with nothing to defend her. It is interesting to note that the satyr is wielding his phallus like a weapon. With this element the Painter highlights the character of the episode, which is not so much erotic as it is purely violent.

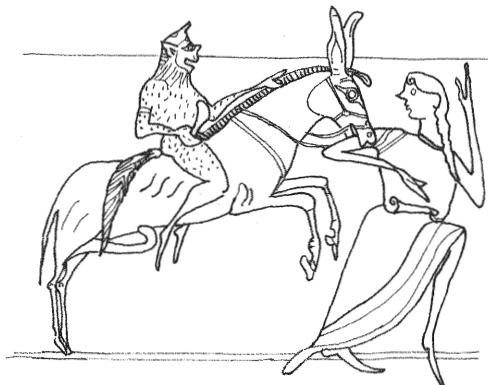


Fig. 4

Because in this case we are not dealing with a vessel used to mix wine, but with a *lekythos*, a word is necessary on the possible relationship between the ceramic image-bearer and the image itself. The *lekythos* assumed a prevailing funerary function in later times, but was originally a small juglet that contained perfume and served in several different kinds of rituals.³² This type of vessel was analogous to the *oinochoe*, preferably used to pour wine. It was, therefore, no coincidence that two *oinochoai*

³¹ Buffalo NY, Albright-Knox Gallery G 600: ADDENDA 3 (12.22); Dionysos 2001, 91 and 108 figs. 35 f.

³² For 5th century *lekythoi*, cfr. GEX 1993, 60 and 62.

produced by the same workshop may have born the head of a satyr as the only form of decoration.³³ In the case of the *lekythos*, one generally tends to relate it to the erotic sphere evoked by the perfume, but given the inseparability of the erotic and symposiac realms in antiquity, it is clear that the *lekythos*, and satyrs depicted on *lekythoi*, may assume a symposiac value.

The third example is found on a fragment, probably of a *dinos*, attributed to Sophilos, the most well known Attic painter of the first quarter of the 6th century, whose artistic peak occurred around 580 B.C.³⁴ Despite the fragmentary condition of the piece, we are able to detect that here, too, the satyr is depicted in his canonical appearance. Once again he is caught in the act of molesting a nymph from the left and from behind: with a gaping mouth, he clutches her arm while wielding his erect phallus with his right hand. The young woman flees toward the right, but in the process turns her terrified face toward her aggressor. She is wearing the short dress of nymphs, embellished by bands of animals that evoke the sphere of the wild to which she belongs (Fig.5). We are able to say this despite the extremely fragmentary state of the depiction. On the famous *dinos* by the same painter there are, in fact, two characters who wear only a *chiton* adorned with rows of animals: Hebe, the daughter and Olympic nymph, and her sister Artemis, mistress of the world of the wild.³⁵

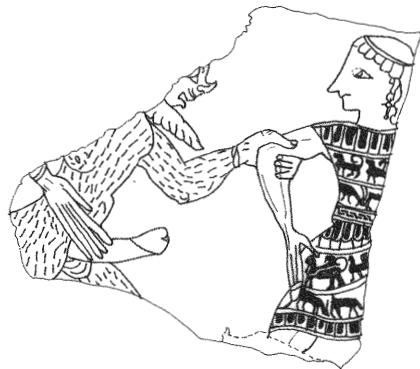


Fig. 5

³³ ABV 10, 2.3.

³⁴ Istanbul 4514: ADDENDA 11 (42.37); Dionysos 2001, 82.

³⁵ London, British Museum 1971.11-1.1: ADDENDA 10 (40.16 bis); Dionysos 2001, 109 fig. 38, and 110 fig. 40.

Hence, there are no fewer than three violent satyrs dating to the first decades of black figured Attic pottery: all upon vessels associated with symposia. It should be stressed that even though figured scenes represented the minority of all decorative schemes at this moment of history, this theme had already developed iconographic coherence. Not only are the physical attributes and the behavior of the protagonists repeated, but there are always just two characters: the violent sexual one and his victim.

The first domesticated satyrs

Whoever looks at the iconographic evolution of vase paintings in the first half of the 6th century in a superficial way might believe that the violent satyrs of the beginning of the century were soon succeeded by Kleitias's version, considered in the next chapter: domesticated satyrs. In fact, aggressive satyrs who violate nymphs seem to disappear altogether from the repertoire of vase painting: satyrs reaching out toward nymphs with whom they dance in the *thiasos* of Lydos³⁶ or satyrs who stealthily approach sleeping nymphs on red figured vases are only vague reminders.³⁷

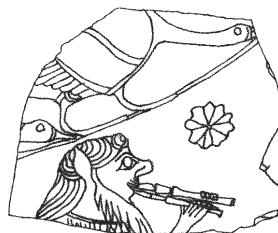


Fig. 6

But the situation is not so simple because the earliest examples of harmless satyrs seem, instead, to precede the François vase; thus, we need to explain the parallel appearance of violent and well-behaved satyrs.

³⁶ See p. 53.

³⁷ See p. 84.

The earliest example is a fragment in early Black Figure from Naukratis depicting the head of a satyr³⁸, turned to the right, who plays an *aulós* (Fig. 6).³⁹ Preceding him must have been another figure of whom an elbow and, perhaps, a small portion of a tail can be detected. Another fragment, also from Naukratis, preserves the lower half of the head of a satyr who is playing an *aulós*, but this piece should be attributed to an eastern Greek workshop, rather than an Athenian one (Fig. 7).⁴⁰

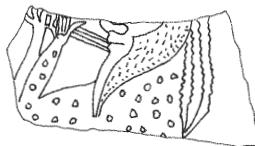


Fig. 7

While these two fragments probably date just after 600 B.C., two other examples have been attributed to the period 580-570 B.C. The first is a fragment of a *dinos* attributed to Sophilos (Fig. 8).⁴¹ Representations of three satyrs striding toward the right are partially preserved: the first seems to be holding his phallus, the second, hairy and ithyphallic, raises his hands, perhaps in order to hold a wineskin upon his shoulder.

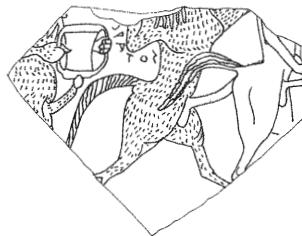


Fig. 8

³⁸ Theoretically, seeing that nothing remains of the body, this could be a centaur: but a centaur playing the flute would be an iconographic *unicum*.

³⁹ London B 103.16: CARPENTER 1986, 91 plate 18B.

⁴⁰ JHS 25, 1905, plate 6.3. Present location unknown.

⁴¹ Private collection USA: PADGETT 2004, 236-238; Dionysos 2001, 82 note 11, and 109 fig. 37.

He is followed by a third hairy, ithyphallic satyr who holds a *karchesion* (i.e., a container similar to a *kantharos*) in his hands. This is presumably a procession of satyrs on the occasion of an event associated with wine. Unfortunately there are no features that allow us to identify the occasion. Considering the period between the time that the Corinthian miniature *amphora* of Athens⁴² and the François vase were manufactured,⁴³ we might contemplate the return of Hephaistos; however, *karchesia* are not wineskins and this procession moves in too orderly a fashion. The fact that some satyrs are hairy, while others have smooth skin, as in the later work of Lydos and the Amasis Painter, is of interest. The most careful vase painters heeded attention to the different ages of satyrs who can be, like human beings, young or old.

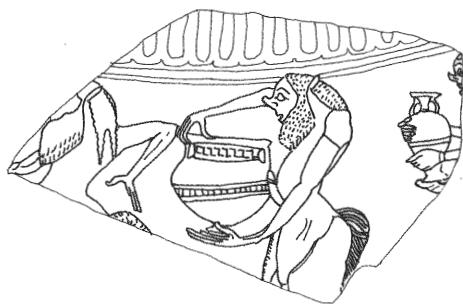


Fig. 9

A fourth fragment from Cortona dated to circa 570 B.C., also of a *dinos*,⁴⁴ bears three satyrs who walk toward the left. The best preserved figure, the one in the center with a typically grotesque profile, erected phallus and tail, holds a column-krater with both hands, evidently full of wine. He is followed by a friend who, in addition to the fact that he holds a small *amphora* in both hands, stands out by a satyr-like profile and the top of his erect phallus. The first one, to the left, is a gesticulating and perhaps also dancing satyr (Fig.9). Upon publishing these fragments, E. Paribeni associated these scenes with another fragment depicting a couple involved in a banquet. This relationship needs to be verified, although it seems logical that these satyrs would be directed toward a *symposion*.

⁴² Athens, National Museum 664: Dionysos 2001, 43 ff. and 70 fig. 13.

⁴³ See the next chapter.

⁴⁴ Cortona, Museo archeologico: HEDREEN 1992, 74 and 139, plate 25b; Dionysos 2001, 82 note 11. Attributed to the KX-Painter or a co-worker.

This, however, is not necessarily the *symposion* in which Dionysos joins Hephaistos and his procession of satyrs: how can we exclude that other analogous tales may have circulated or that satyrs may have also participated in human *symposia*?

The context of the depictions involving docile satyrs remains unclear. We are unable to locate evident continuity in later iconography wherein the *thiasos* of dancing satyrs substitutes a procession of satyrs. But while the time frame is short, the coherence of the iconography is significant. Moreover, the recurring elements should not be taken for granted: the fact that *dinoi* are the most common medium, the relationship with Dionysian music and wine, and their well-mannered behavior. This contrasts with the semi-animalesque and strongly sexual attributes of the satyrs, who fit much better to the molesters of nymphs. Dionysos is implicitly present with the wine vessels and this presence will explain the changed behavior of the satyrs.

There are not many depictions of satyrs in the decades preceding the Kleitias *krater*, but the number is significant if we consider the scarcity of human figures in the overall repertoire of vase painting, which was still dominated by animal friezes: a clue to the importance of these problematic figures to the vase painters and the users of the vessels. However, at the moment, we can only establish the parallel existence of two contrasting types of satyrs: violent satyrs, whose sexuality represents a threat and arouses terror, and domesticated satyrs, who behave like civilized people despite their wild appearance. This distinction is heightened by the fact that violent satyrs always act alone, while their well-mannered counterparts appear in groups: in fact, *symposia* are collective institutions that represented a microcosm of the *polis*.

SATYRS AND HEPHAISTOS: THE FRANÇOIS VASE

How can the parallel existence of such different kinds of satyrs be explained? How can such a brute appearance be compatible with religious activities? The first depiction of satyrs within a mythological context will help us to understand.

This representation is found on the famous volute-*krater* shaped by Ergotimos and decorated by Kleitias around 565 B.C. that the French engineer Alexandre François discovered in 1844-45 in a princely tomb near Chiusi.⁴⁵ This is an exceptional piece both in terms of its dimensions and the wealth and quality of the decorative program. One of the problems posed by this vase has been to identify the common denominator between the many figured friezes and, thus, to provide a context for readings of single images. This question has no unequivocal answer. Considering the mainly symposial function of the *krater*, the common denominator of the various scenes would have been viewed and interpreted in a different way, according to their current concerns, by the participants – Greek or Etruscan – in the banquet whose central focus was the *krater*.⁴⁶

The satyr frieze is a secondary register on side B, located below the principal scene depicting a divine procession on the occasion of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. In contrast to the latter, the satyr frieze does not run around the belly of the vase, but is only on one side. The narrative context is that of the return – or, better, the leading home – of Hephaistos. Hephaistos, son of Hera, was chased down from Olympus by his own mother because he was born with a deformity. In order to avenge himself, he sent her a magnificent, but cursed, throne upon which Hera remained immobilized. Ares, the god of war, was not able to lead his brother home by force; instead, Dionysos succeeded with wine. The return of Hephaistos to Olympus not only brought peace back to the Olympic family, but also restored the dignity of the queen of the gods.

There is no doubt about this reading since the names of all figures are clearly written on the vase. The protagonist of the episode is Dionysos who Kleitias placed at the center of the frieze; he is followed to the right by Hephaistos who rides a mule, holds tongs in his hand and has a deformed foot. Immediately following Hephaistos are three satyrs, collectively called *silenoī*: the first balances a full wineskin on his shoulder, the second plays an *aulós*, and the third holds a young woman in his

⁴⁵ Florence 4209: ADDENDA 21 (76.1).

⁴⁶ ISLER-KERÉNYI 1997b.

arms. Three young girls called *nymphai* by the vase painter (the first of whom is not preserved) conclude the procession to the right (*Fig. 10*). The left half of the frieze is occupied, in front of Dionysos, by the Olympic family which welcomes the procession: Aphrodite, the bride promised unhappily to Hephaistos, Zeus and Hera, each upon his throne, and their children Athena, Ares, Artemis, possibly Apollo⁴⁷ and Hermes. The situation is clear: they are participating in the moment immediately preceding the reconciliation of the family and the re-establishment of cosmic order.

Dionysos the peacemaker

The satyrs' participation is evidently subordinate to that of Hephaistos and the latter to the action of Dionysos. To understand the image we need to avoid modern simplifications: considering Hera's rank in the cosmic order, her liberation cannot have been a purely comic episode, but a crucial event for the stability of that order.⁴⁸ In this context the role of Dionysos, who Kleitias placed intentionally at the center of the scene, is implied. His task is to reunite the disowned son with his mother and reclaim Hera's dignity as queen. Dionysos was responsible not only for returning peace to family, but for the re-establishment of divine order.

This reading coincides perfectly with the other image of Dionysos on the same *krater*, at the center of side A in the procession of the gods. A careful analysis of this image, which can be associated with the version presented by Sophilos fifteen years earlier, reveals that Kleitias also attributes Dionysos with the role of guaranteeing the continuity and stability of the system ruled by Zeus on, perhaps, the most crucial moment in the destiny of the cosmos.⁴⁹

This role of Dionysos, which is not mentioned in the scarce contemporary written record⁵⁰, is confirmed by other rare mythological episodes recounted by vase painters. In the Gigantomachy, another important event in cosmic history, Dionysos successfully intervened as an ally of the Olympic gods and adversary of the Giants,⁵¹ in the episode of

⁴⁷ The name is missing and the traditional identification with Poseidon is hypothetical.

⁴⁸ On the position of Hera in the mental system of the archaic period, cfr. VERNANT 1973, 71: „Comme épouse de Zeus, Héra ne patronne pas seulement l'union légitime; par l'intermédiaire du roi des dieux, elle est associée au pouvoir souverain qu'elle peut octroyer, en quelque sorte indirectement, par le biais de cette couche royale qu'elle partage avec son mari.“

⁴⁹ ISLER-KERÉNYI 1997a.

⁵⁰ But Dionysos as an unifying and reconciling god is well attested in tragedy: BIERL 1991, especially 219 f.

⁵¹ CARPENTER 1986, 55-75. Cfr. also CARPENTER 1997, 15-34.

Kyknos, he is a symbol of cosmic order;⁵² and he participates, together with the other gods, in the miraculous birth of Athena, who would become the patron of Athens and goddess of the *polis*.⁵³

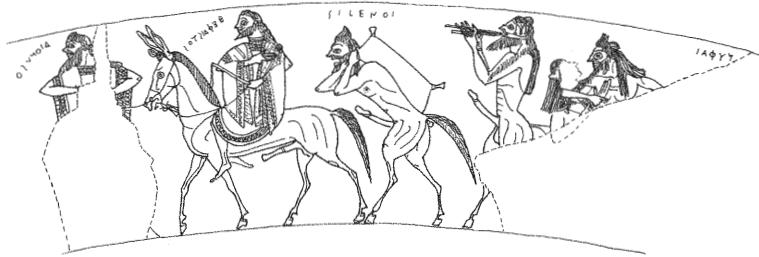


Fig. 10

The image of Dionysos proposed by the vase painters of the 6th century B.C. contradicts the idea, profoundly rooted in the tradition of Dionysian studies, that the god of wine should be placed at the opposite end of civic order and life, represented by Apollo, and that he represents chaos and the derangement of natural instincts. It was necessary to summarize the history of these studies in order to understand the reason behind this vision, which is clearly unilateral and not very credible if one thinks about the central position of Dionysos and his festivals in the calendar of Athens.⁵⁴ The iconography of vase painting fully confirms more recent interpretations that view the god of wine and theater as part of this order, whose stability was guaranteed by the institutionalized and controlled occasions of escape offered by certain Dionysiac festivals as well as by the institution of the *symposion*.⁵⁵

⁵² Dionysos 2001, 126 f.

⁵³ Dionysos 2001, 141.

⁵⁴ ISLER-KERÉNYI 2001a.

⁵⁵ ROSSI 1983; MURRAY 1990 with, especially, the contributions of O. Murray and E. Pellizer.

Hephaistos and Solon

Before we discuss satyrs who follow Hephaistos, we have to consider the god himself. Who is Hephaistos? We recall his most distinctive peculiarities, well attested by mythological sources. First of all, he is the disowned son of the chief Olympic gods, or at least the queen of the gods.⁵⁶ He was refused, but later, as we have seen, welcomed back into the family of Zeus. Moreover, he is – paradoxically – the ancestor of the kings of Athens: born from the earth and simultaneously from the seeds that Hephaistos spread whilst pursuing Athena.⁵⁷ A third characteristic is his role as the god of fire: and we know – implicitly from a fragment of a Homeric hymn in his honor⁵⁸ – that fire was already considered in antiquity to be a prerequisite of civilization. But it is also the prerequisite of the Prometheian sacrifice that regulates the relationship between the divine and human worlds. Neither Olympus nor the *polis* can do without fire and, thus, without Hephaistos. Moreover, as god of fire, Hephaistos is the patron of craftsmen and, in particular, potters: it is no coincidence that the most conspicuous evidence of Hephaistos are his images on vases.⁵⁹

These distinctive traits of Hephaistos seem at first glance to be dissociated. In order to understand the coherence of these traits, it is not necessary to search for the presumed origins of the god (remote or exotic), as some scholars beginning with Wilamowitz still tend to do.⁶⁰ One simply needs to relate the characteristics listed here with the historical period in which the images were created: all of an early, if not initial, phase of the iconography.⁶¹

In the decades during which Sophilos's *dinos* and the François vase were created, Athens witnessed the archonship of Solon – begun, according to the sources, in 594/3 or the 570's B.C. – and experienced the new arrangement of the *polis* that he proposed for the first time.⁶² Given the relevance of this theme for the contemporary population it must have been a common subject of discussion at *symposia* held at that time: according to our hypothesis, the Dionysian iconography of the vases is the proof. This new arrangement was Solon's rather effective response to the incumbent danger of internal conflict, a logical reaction to the economic and social inequality that developed in Attica during the 7th century. We

⁵⁶ KERÉNYI 1997, 116 ff.

⁵⁷ KERÉNYI 1997, 94.

⁵⁸ h. Hom. Heph.; cfr. SHAPIRO 1995, 2 with note 14.

⁵⁹ LIMC IV.1 (1988) 627-654 (A. Hermary).

⁶⁰ Cfr. SHAPIRO 1995, 6 (notes 42-46).

⁶¹ Prior to the François vase only the famous Corinthian miniature *amphora* is known: Athens, National Museum 664: Dionysos 2001, 43 ff. and 70 fig. 13.

⁶² Dionysos 2001, 96 f. and 224 f.

know the basic concepts and some of the practical provisions of Solon's plan.⁶³ One of the main ideas involved reconciling the various categories of citizens without eliminating the traditional hierarchy. The figure of Dionysos, who for Sophilos and Kleitias was a peacemaker and guarantor of cosmic order (which in turn prefigured the order of the *polis*) fits perfectly into this picture.

For Solon the *polis* consisted of the sum of its *oikoi*, its families. The economic base of the *oikoi* was traditionally land. According to the Solonian plan – probably an invention of his time rather than his own – the balance between the *oikoi* was crucial for internal peace. It needed to prevent single families from becoming too powerful or too numerous. One of the instruments that permitted the *kyrios*, head of the *oikos*, to regulate the number of heirs amongst whom his land would be divided was the legitimization of his children: some of whom he accepted and some of whom he denied.⁶⁴ But he was still faced with the problem of how to maintain his other children. This problem, that was not only an Athenian one but of all Greek city-states of the time, was normally resolved through emigration and the foundation of colonies. We know of no Athenian colonies prior to the 5th century. Solon's solution must have been different: to assess and create incentives for craft production and commerce. We are led to this conclusion by some measures reported by Plutarchos. For example, an elderly father had the right to be maintained by his son only if he had created a vocation for that son.⁶⁵ Another merit of Solon, in addition to having avoided a bloody revolt in the *polis*, was to have welcomed back into Athens citizens who were previously forced to flee.⁶⁶

These two provisions – the establishment of manual labor as a way of maintaining children not considered to be heirs and calling refugees back to their homeland – are probably closely connected: because a vocation provided as great economic security to the repatriated as land.⁶⁷ And we know that one of the primary reasons for the prosperity of 6th century Athens were the artisanal skills of its inhabitants.⁶⁸

Solon did not invent the figure of Hephaistos, who was already well known in Homeric epic, but his reforms in Athens help to explain

⁶³ ISLER-KERÉNYI 1993, 3 note 5; RAAFLAUB 1996.

⁶⁴ ISLER-KERÉNYI 1993, 9 note 41.

⁶⁵ RAAFLAUB 1996, 1062 f. with notes 78 and 79.

⁶⁶ Sol. 5, 8-17.

⁶⁷ In fact, he granted citizenship to those who moved to Athens in order to practice a trade: RAAFLAUB 1996, 1063 (with note 78). Confirming the importance of craftsmanship (and of commerce), the introduction of coinage in Greece (and Athens) just after Solon should be recalled: PARISE 1996, 728.

⁶⁸ Cfr. SHAPIRO 1989, 20.

the heightened interest and positive interpretation of him by Sophilos and Kleitias.⁶⁹ With whom else among the gods could the large body of citizens (consisting of refugees who were welcomed back into their homeland, the children of Athenians who were not legitimated – *nothoi* – as well as craftsmen, especially those who were skilled in the use of fire: smiths, bronze workers and potters) identify themselves?

Hephaistos rides a mule, here as well as in the processions of the gods depicted by Kleitias, Sophilos and in all later iconography. This creature can be interpreted as the plebeian variant of the horse: a beast of burden that recalls the *chora*, the area surrounding the city which the city could not survive without. This was an intermediate zone between the civilized world and the wild world of nature. The mule is a link between the *chora* and the city, but his sexual behavior continues to reflect the unpredictable and dangerous world outside the *polis*. The reintegration of Hephaistos, as Kleitias recounts, underscores the difficult but interdependent relationship of the city and its citizens with the surrounding rural world.

The satyrs

With this, we now have to deal with the satyrs who follow Hephaistos and move like him from the *chora* to the center of the *polis*. From the *chora* they transport the wine used by Dionysos to placate the ill-feelings of his brother and which, we assume, was drunk during the banquet of reconciliation. We do not know if Kleitias believed that wine was produced by the satyrs, as attested by iconography beginning around 540 B.C.⁷⁰

Scholars have observed a number of times that the equine legs of Kleitias's satyrs are an exception in the iconography of satyrs: they are evidently intended to assimilate them with Hephaistos's mule. This association, expressed in a more dramatic way by the *lekythos* considered above,⁷¹ would continue to be a recurring element in the iconography of satyrs until the 5th century.⁷² It also serves to emphasize the playful nature of the satyrs' sexuality that has nothing to do with fertility.⁷³

The second satyr plays an *aulós*: an instrument and a type of music that pertains to Dionysian escape. The *aulós* to his mouth clearly distinguishes this satyr – like his predecessors at the beginning of the

⁶⁹ In this context, the location of Hephaistos at the end of the procession of the gods but next to the house of Thetis is symptomatic: Dionysos 2001, 86 f. and 88.

⁷⁰ See p. 67 ff.

⁷¹ See p. 12 ff.

⁷² LISSARRAGUE 1988, 338 and 346; PADGETT 2000; See also p. 88 f.

⁷³ LISSARRAGUE 1987b.

century whose narrative context is unknown⁷⁴ – from the violent satyrs who frighten their victims, shouting with gaping mouths.

The third satyr grips a woman: one of many. Neither she nor her companions show surprise or fear, in contrast to the companions who witness the aggression of Troilos and Polyxena by Achilles in the contiguous scene on side A of the *krater*. Where do these *nymphai* come from?

At this point a digression is necessary. The friezes of the François vase located on the neck and upper rim are separated by handles and, thus, cannot be read together. The principal frieze unfolds uninterrupted from one side of the vase to the other despite the presence of handles: this is explained by the fact that when Kleitias created this image, he essentially followed Sophilos who had planned the scene for a *dinos*, a recipient without handles.

The underlying frieze presents an intermediate solution: while to the right of the frieze depicting the pursuit of Troilos there is a marked break corresponding with the handle of the *krater*, on the other side, instead of a break, the pictures are superposed. Differently from the gate of Troy, located exactly in line with the black band of the handle attachment, the fountain – also a kind of building – was shifted to the right. The viewer of the image is invited to link the two scenes, even if it is at more of a mental than a narrative level.⁷⁵ The fountain, theater of Achilles's ambush, may also have been intended as the place where the satyrs who follow Hephaistos went to seek nymphs. It is well known that the mythological nymphs live in proximity to water and springs. But the fountain is a familiar place even for human nymphs: gathering water was a task for daughters who were old enough to be married. The term *nymphé* does not, in fact, distinguish between the two.⁷⁶ But as the episode narrated by Kleitias clearly demonstrates, the fountain is a dangerous place: far from the walls of Troy, on the border between the civilized and wild worlds.

What about the satyrs? Like Hephaistos, they come from the *chora*, the intermediate space between the *polis* and outside world. They are hybrids as Hephaistos is a *nothos* (so too are mules bastards): their presence within the city is not obvious. They behave differently from Achilles who, when he attacked Troilos and Polyxena at the fountain, behaved like a violent satyr committing an act of arrogance that offends the rules of civilized life. Satyrs also respond to their sexual instincts, but they act in a controlled manner bringing away the nymphs (in this case

⁷⁴ See p. 15 ff.

⁷⁵ ISLER-KERÉNYI 2000, 558 figs. 2-4.

⁷⁶ Dionysos 2001, 94.

consentingly) to the place of reconciliation and the controlled consumption of wine.

All of this happens according to the will of Dionysos: if his role is to re-establish cosmic order, the *polis* being a reflection of this order, it is also because of his initiative that satyrs are accepted into the *polis*. And it is he who designates some of the *nymphai*, possibly the surplus daughters of Athenian parents, to the realm of the *symposion*.

We may now resume the question posed in the first chapter, the parallel existence of two opposing types of satyrs depicted in vase paintings of the first quarter of the 6th century. Violence is part of the world: it is elemental. The male carries it within his body and the violent satyr exhibits it, using his phallus as a weapon: there is no figure more suitable than the satyr to express the problem of violence. The satyr, being part animal, is always dangerous. But he becomes harmless, and in fact is welcomed, when together with Hephaistos he obtains access to Olympus and to the *polis*. Without Dionysos he could not enter. And yet he bears wine, synonymous with Dionysos, whether it is contained in wineskin, a *karchesion* or in a *krater*:⁷⁷ The wine transforms him from a violent animal into a musician. The message is clear: the satyrs need Dionysos, but Dionysos also needs his satyrs.

This response is in full agreement with the Solonian spirit and the image that the vase painters of the age of Solon gave to Dionysos. Seeing that violence exists and cannot be eliminated, there is a need to integrate and domesticate it, offering the *symposia* as a space and an occasion to express it without damaging the collective: to convert violence into creativity and enjoyment.

For now another question posed in the introduction remains open: who are the satyrs and why, despite their ubiquity in vase paintings, are they almost completely absent from mythology? Our iconographic journey will continue beyond the François vase, and even beyond Attic vase painting. Satyrs do, in fact, appear on pottery manufactured at other Greek centers of the second quarter of the 6th century B.C.

⁷⁷ MASSENZIO 1999, 2.

3

SATYRS AND DANCERS

The François vase communicates to us that satyrs modify their aggressive and uncivilized behavior when they are in the presence of Hephaistos and, thus, within the realm of Dionysos: it is his merit that they become compatible with the order of the city despite their semi-animal, potentially violent and markedly sexual nature. This confirms the hypothesis expressed in relation to the first depictions of domesticated satyrs with wine containers in their hands.⁷⁸ We will consider later the iconography of satyrs after the period 570-560 B.C. But first we have to examine several depictions, all from the second quarter of the 6th century, but not all Attic, which are exceptions compared to the prevailing iconographic currents.

Corinthian

The first is found on a large late Corinthian footed *aryballos*, now in Berlin.⁷⁹ The subject of the depiction is one of the most common for this type of vase: Dionysian dancers – male figures with a grotesque look, often depicted in a group, who perform silly dances. This motif is found in forms that vary somewhat from one workshop to another and occurs on the pottery produced in all Greek centers in the first half of the 6th century, representing the most common alternative to animal friezes. Some of them hold drinking horns or dance around a large *krater*. This fact demonstrates that grotesque dancers are part of the world of Dionysos. This is confirmed by the Amasis Painter, one of the last to depict them, who shows the dancers together with Dionysos.⁸⁰

There was a lengthy controversy about these figures between scholars who attributed them to the theater and attempted to use the grotesque dancers to reconstruct the origins of Attic comedy: this discussion could not have and has no firm conclusion. The iconography does not allow us to categorically deny or affirm a link with the theater, nor does it

⁷⁸ See p. 16 f.

⁷⁹ Berlin V.I. 4509: AMYX 1988, 620 s.; Dionysos 2001, 47 e 72 figs. 16-17.

⁸⁰ These images are, in chronological order from 550 to 530 B.C.: 1. *Amphora*, Berlin 1690: ADDENDA 42 (151.11); 2. *Aryballos*, New York 62.11.11: ADDENDA 45 (155 Para 66); 3. *Amphora*, Louvre F 36: ADDENDA 42 (150.6); 4. *Amphora*, Basle Kä 420: ADDENDA 43 (151 Para 65); 5. *Lekythos*, Ex Athens Kerameikos 25: ADDENDA 45 (155.61). For the chronology of the Amasis Painter, see ISLER 1994.

clarify how and where the dramatic genres originated.⁸¹ The iconography demonstrates that these dancers are precursors of komasts, namely participants in human *symposia* who at a certain time of night begin to dance. The image of the dancer evokes particular situations induced by wine and, hence, by the presence of Dionysos: situations in which one behaves or feels differently from the norm.⁸²

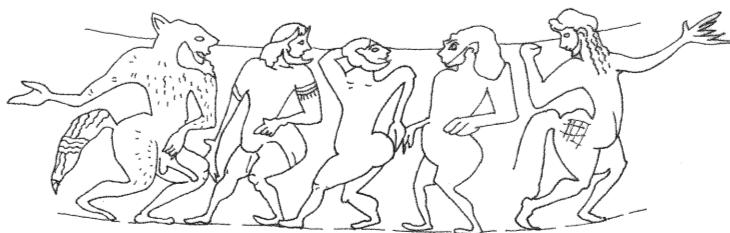


Fig. 11

The late Corinthian *aryballos* in question depicts five dancers (Fig. 11). But of the five, the two located at the margins of the depiction appear to be satyrs: both have an equine tail, while the one to the left is bearded and has equine ears. Satyrs are generally rare in the repertoire of Corinthian pottery, even if they are well known, making the image even more significant.⁸³ Taken in itself, this fact would be enigmatic were it not for analogies in other traditions. At least we can say for now that these satyrs or quasi-satyrs move in the same contexts as dancers.

Examples from Boeotia

Satyrs who appear among dancers in human rather than in mythological contexts are also found on the Boeotian pottery of the second quarter of the century. This tradition was stylistically related to that of Athens, but with some original traits: the choice of shapes differs as does the obviously ritual, not only strictly symposial, use of the vases. The manner of expression is also different: more explicit and, thus, more accessible to us.

⁸¹ ISLER-KERÉNYI 2005.

⁸² Dionysos 2001, 65.

⁸³ Cfr. the examples cited by SEEBERG 1971, 4.

The first of these satyrs is found on one of the feet of a ritual tripod that, like other similar examples, bears linked scenes (*Fig. 12*).⁸⁴ In this case, the three panels – each on one foot – depict the following motifs: a dancer who masturbates, an evidently homoerotic pair of dancers, and a satyr – or at least a male figure with an equine tail – who displays his disproportionately large phallus to a female figure.

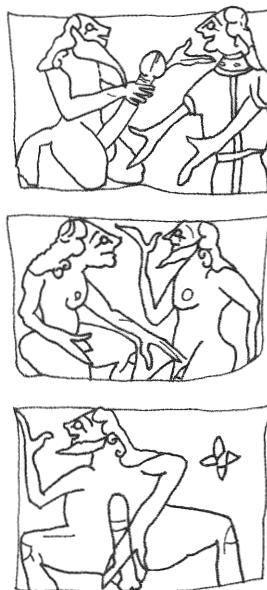


Fig. 12

A second satyr is found in the upper frieze of a *kantharos* within a line of dancers on both sides of the vase.⁸⁵ On the far right side of side A is a musician playing an *aulós*. Wine is present in a *dinos* located on the left margin of the frieze: this is clearly an allusion to a Dionysian rite. The scene on the other side essentially depicts the same situation. The last dancer to the left, turned away from the others, is a true satyr: he has equine ears and tail and holds his phallus, which is much larger than those of his companions (*Fig. 13*). The most plausible explanation for the similarities and differences between this satyr and the dancers is that the

⁸⁴ Athens, National Museum 938: ABV 30.4; Dionysos 2001, 51 f. and 75 fig. 22.

⁸⁵ Munich 6010 (419): ADDENDA 8 (30.6); Dionysos 2001, 52 and 76 fig. 23.

vase painter wished to represent a specific kind of situation: a Dionysian rite in which there are those among the dancers who feel like or become a satyr in the eyes of the others. This is suggested by the second dancer from the left, who turns his head to look at the satyr. The context of this transformation is evidently ritual: and ritual is by nature an intermediary between the human and mythical realms.⁸⁶

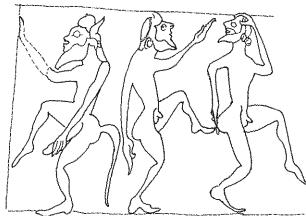


Fig. 13

The simultaneous presence of satyrs and dancers in a single space implying the presence of wine and Dionysian music is also attested by a Boeotian vase of special form and function bearing satyrs of different ages who move between pairs of male dancers (*Fig. 14*).⁸⁷



Fig. 14

⁸⁶ On the rites and their representations, see the details on pp. 48 f. and 79 f. in this volume; see also ISLER-KERÉNYI 2002, 74 f.

⁸⁷ Berlin 3366: Dionysos 2001, 52 and 77 fig. 26.

Examples from Attica

These Boeotian examples, like the Corinthian *aryballos* treated above, also shed light upon some Attic cups of the Siana type which date to the same period and depict a Dionysian dance in which one of the participants, also located at the margin, appears to be a satyr: by the manner in which he turns away, addressing those who use the vessel, his face is transformed into a satyr mask (*Fig. 15*).⁸⁸ However, other attributes of the satyr – the tail, equine ears and large phallus – are missing. The proposed reading would remain open if this were an isolated example among Attic pottery.⁸⁹



Fig. 15

Instances of dancers and satyrs in the same scene are also found on Tyrrhenian pottery where Dionysian dancers are among the most common subjects, while they tend to disappear in the typical Attic tradition. This too is one of the characteristics that distinguishes these vases and which contributes toward uncertainty with regard to their place of production and chronology.⁹⁰ The only certainty is that they were sold almost exclusively in Etruria, which is enough to explain the particular character of the iconography.⁹¹ Dancers and satyrs are also found together, as we shall see later, among the followers of the mule rider.⁹² In another case, attributed to the same hand, two satyrs join a party of dancers enjoying themselves uninhibitedly with their erotic female compa-

⁸⁸ Harvard 1925.30.133: ADDENDA 9 (34.2 below); other examples in *Dionysos* 2001, 50 (note 70) and 74 fig. 20.

⁸⁹ Other examples of the shift from the *komos* to the *thiasos*: KUNZE-GÖTTE 1992, 154.

⁹⁰ KLUIVER 1995, 79 ff.; KLUIVER 1996, 30 ff.; CANCIANI 1997. Cfr. p. 57 note 171 in this volume.

⁹¹ *Dionysos* 2001, 138 f.

⁹² Louvre E 860: ADDENDA 27 (103.111); *Dionysos* 2001, 139 f. and 168 figs. 92-93; KLUIVER 1995, 67 no. 48.

ions near a sumptuous vine:⁹³ a situation that recalls the scene on the Boeotian *kantharos* described above.

But the assimilation to satyrs occurred not only in the context of Dionysian dances, but during *symposia*, as a *dinos* dating just after 570 B.C. demonstrates.⁹⁴ And we also find examples, as we shall see, in the *thiasos* and its variants, in a context that might seem at first to be mythological, rather than human.



Fig. 16

To this group of dancers who appear to have been transformed into satyrs we might add a final illuminating depiction of three satyrs on the handle of one of the very few black figure *aryballois*, that is signed by Nearchos.⁹⁵ All three masturbate energetically and even the names assigned to each figure allude to this activity (Fig. 16). Moreover, in contrast to the satyr on the Boeotian tripod who turns his attention to a female, the satyr at the center of this carefully painted image holds his face frontally, addressing the user of the *aryballos*. Satyrs who address the external viewer are treated amply below.⁹⁶ In this case, the plurality of the satyrs is noteworthy. In fact, we shall see that becoming a satyr – obviously not a violent satyr but a well-mannered one – happened during collective, rather than individual experiences. Nevertheless, the material treated in this chapter indicates without a margin of doubt that assimilation of dancers to satyrs occurred through their sexuality.

⁹³ Copenhagen, National Museum Chr.VIII (57); Para 38 (102.97); Dionysos 2001, 139 f. and 166 f. figs. 88-91; KLUIVER 1995, 59 no. 13.

⁹⁴ Louvre E 876: ADDENDA 24 (90.1); Dionysos 2001, 98 f.

⁹⁵ New York 26.49: ADDENDA 23 (83.4); Dionysos 2001, 193 f. and 216 figs. 122-123. The *aryballos* is a type of *unguentarium* that imitates in pottery the leather sack made from the scrotum of rams: Dionysos 2001, 193.

⁹⁶ See pp. 39, 43, 51, 53 and 77.

The examples described here might be considered exceptions within the broader repertoires of their respective productions, but, as we shall see in the following chapters dedicated to current iconography, they are significant cases. They demonstrate that satyrs feel at home in the same context as Dionysian dancers: an environment that is neither mythological nor far removed in time, but is human. This also explains their almost complete absence in mythology despite their popularity in figural art, especially on vases. And it is no longer possible to refute the hypothesis that satyrs, at least those depicted on pottery, represented the users of the images: the males who assembled at *symposia*. This was where they came into contact with Dionysos through the rites of wine and in particular moments: they felt and celebrated the presence of the god of metamorphoses, who provoked their own *metamorphosis* into satyrs.

This hypothesis needs to be verified and compared with the image of satyrs that would be exhibited by the Satyr Play two generations after the images presented here.

4

SATYRS AND THE EPIPHANIES OF DIONYSOS

The *thiasos*, a group of dancing or processional characters who surround Dionysos, is the most common type of image involving satyrs and clearly one of the most popular decorative schemes, especially on *amphoras* and *kraters* dated to the 6th century.⁹⁷ The extremely large number of examples forces us to choose, but our choice is significant.



Fig. 17

One of the earliest examples, dated around 560 B.C., consists of just two figures: Dionysos, standing in a dignified manner with a *kantharos* in hand, and a dancing satyr who greets the god with a gesture (Fig.17).⁹⁸ During the 6th century, this formula was progressively enriched and included more than one satyr, dancing nymphs, and even a female figure of variable status located in front of Dionysos at the center of the image.⁹⁹ The body of evidence, considered in chronological order, clearly indicates that of all the participants in the *thiasos*, satyrs are considered to be the most important, while female figures are generally secondary, albeit never devoid of meaning.

⁹⁷ The term *thiasos* is intended here strictly in the sense of a figurative formula and should not be confused with the ritual *thiasos* mentioned in literary sources studied by VILLANUEVA PUIG 1998, and referred to, for example, by SEAFORD 1981, 252 f. and 1988, 8 f. On this crucial problem: JACCOTTET 2003, 21 ff. This question will be addressed on p. 95.

⁹⁸ *Amphora* Munich 1447: ADDENDA 22 (81.1 below); Dionysos 2001, 115 and 145 fig. 44.

⁹⁹ Dionysos 2001, 114-124.

A recurring element is the gesture of greeting with which the satyr, or one of the satyrs welcomes Dionysos while dancing (*Fig. 18*). This gesture was called *skopeuma* when the satyr had his arm upraised and his hand at his forehead, thus trying to protect his eyes from something that is blinding him.¹⁰⁰ This gesture expresses the joyous surprise of the satyr, and the sudden and unexpected apparition of the object of the greeting, the god: his epiphany.

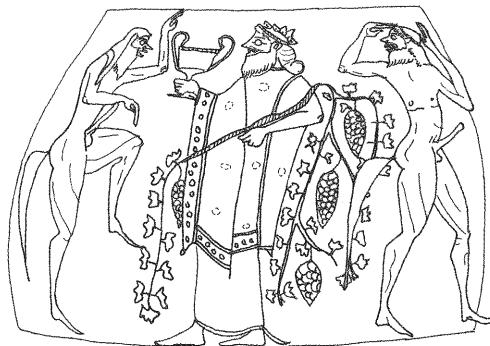


Fig. 18

We cannot dismiss the possibility that the scenes with the *skopeuma* refer to a specific mythological event, to an apparition of Dionysos among the satyrs of the mythical era. But the great variability of the iconographic formula, as well as the number and typology of the participants, suggests a greater probability that the *thiasos* represented on vases was intended to evoke Dionysos generically, in a way that is typical of him: as the divinity who likes to manifest himself suddenly to the satyrs and who feels at ease among the satyrs and their female companions.

The *thiasoi* of Lydos

Lydos, the greatest vase painter active after Kleitias and forerunner of Exekias and the Amasis Painter, exhibits a vast repertoire of Dionysian imagery that includes the mule rider, the Gigantomachy, the duel between Ares and Herakles on the body of Kyknos, grotesque dancers, the *sympo-sion* and the *thiasos*.¹⁰¹ The next chapter is dedicated to the image of the mule rider.

¹⁰⁰ VOELKE 2001, 136, 299 and 385. Cfr. the *amphora* Basle L 21, dated at the latest to around 540 B.C.: Dionysos 2001, 116 and 147 fig. 46 (*Fig. 18*).

¹⁰¹ Dionysos 2001, 124-127.

The participation of Dionysos as ally of the Olympic gods in the great battle that shook the foundation of the cosmos confirms the image given to him by Sophilos and Kleitias: the image of a divinity who was all but marginal. In fact, he was of crucial importance for the stability and continuity of Zeus's order (who, for the original users of the vases, coincided with the civic reorganization of Athens between Solon and Peisistratos). In this sense it is assumed that he takes part, together with the great god of the sea, in the struggle between the children of Zeus, Ares and Herakles.¹⁰²

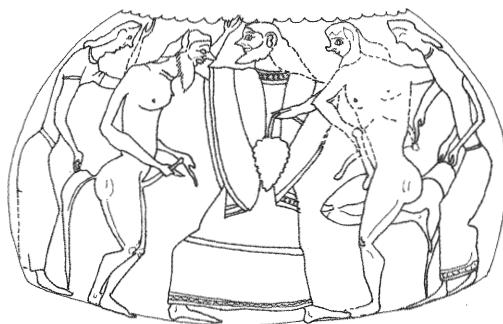


Fig. 19

In terms of the grotesque dancers, their presence, at least in the ordinary repertoire of vase painters, tends to decline around the middle of the century:¹⁰³ The Amasis Painter would be the last to heed them any importance.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, while Lydos highlights their erotic (clearly homosexual) connotation on two *amphorae*¹⁰⁵ – and the same holds true for the banqueting couple surrounded by dancers¹⁰⁶ –, he stresses the affinity with the satyrs of the *thiasos* on his *kylikes*: the companions of the dancers and the companions of the satyrs are, in fact, one and the same.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² *Oinochoe* of Kolchos, Berlin 1732: ADDENDA 30 (110.37); Dionysos 2001, 126 f. and 156 figs. 65 f.

¹⁰³ But remains important on Tyrrhenian *amphorae*, cfr. p. 31 f., 57 f. and 79. On the latest black-figured komasts see SMITH 2003.

¹⁰⁴ See p. 27 note 80.

¹⁰⁵ Nikosia C 440: ADDENDA 30 (109.28); Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 206: ADDENDA 30 (109.27).

¹⁰⁶ Florence 70995: ADDENDA 30 (110.32); Dionysos 2001, 124 f. and 155 fig. 62.

¹⁰⁷ Dionysos 2001, 58 f.

Apart from the *krater* that will be treated in the next chapter,¹⁰⁸ there are three images of *thiasoi* among the repertoire of Lydos. The first, on a fragmentary *amphora* now in Paris,¹⁰⁹ is noteworthy because it shows Dionysos not in hieratic composure as in the most common iconographic type, but in motion: he moves with broad strides toward the right while turning his head to the left (Fig. 19). The meaning of the formula in this context is most probably to express the unexpected apparition of the god to his *thiasos*. Confirmation of this reading is the gesture of greeting, unfortunately not easily recognizable due to the poor preservation of the vase, made toward the god by one of the two dancing nymphs: the deity returns the greeting. The other dancing nymph who gestures with both hands to the right seems to want to attract attention to something that is happening in front of her: the transformation, in progress, of the two satyrs who both hold their erect phallus while dancing. The one to the left apparently wants to show it off explicitly. At the center of the image is a bunch of grapes that Dionysos holds in his left hand and with which he identifies himself as we shall see.¹¹⁰ This image indicates in the most succinct way that Dionysos appears during the *thiasos*: the spectators of his epiphany are the participants in the *thiasos*.



Fig. 20

¹⁰⁸ New York 31.11.11: ADDENDA 29 (108.5).

¹⁰⁹ Louvre Cp 10634: ADDENDA 30 (110.31); Dionysos 2001, 124 and 154 fig. 61.

¹¹⁰ See p. 71. Cfr. Alc. fr. 346 (reported by MASSENZIO 1999, 29) where wine is called the „son of the vine“. Cfr. also Pi. O. 7.2 and N. 9.52. On the association of Dionysos with wine: MASSENZIO 1999, 2.

An important point to emphasize about the *thiasos* on the psykter-amphora in London¹¹¹ is that the satyrs who participate are of various ages, just as the fragment attributed to Sophilos between 580 and 570 B.C. (Fig. 20).¹¹² Like the *krater* that will be discussed in the next chapter, the rigid behavior of Dionysos contrasts with the festive movement of the satyrs and nymphs: this too, as we shall see, is a possible allusion to his epiphany.



Fig. 21

The third depiction of a *thiasos* is a work attributed either to Lydos or one of his followers.¹¹³ The fact that Dionysos is not explicitly represented does not mean that he is absent: his presence is implied in the dance of the satyrs and nymphs. The erotic nature of the dance is confirmed by the erected phalluses of the satyrs. The central satyr on the side A turns his face like a mask to address the viewer of the vase (Fig. 21): the *thiasos* is therefore an event not – or not only – of the remote, mythical past, but of the present of whoever tasted wine from the *amphora*.

¹¹¹ British Museum 1848.6-19.5: ADDENDA 30 (109.29); Dionysos 2001, 125 and 155 fig. 63.

¹¹² See p. 16 note 41.

¹¹³ Amphora Basle BS 424: Dionysos 2001, 125 f. and 156 fig. 64.

What does the great Lydos tell us about the satyrs in the *thiasos*? He seems to consider them more important than the nymphs and characterizes them as highly erotic beings. And, as argued at the conclusion of the previous chapter, it is precisely this erotic element that forms a link between the satyrs and dancers. If the satyr, equivalent to the sexually active dancer, summons the external viewer into the image, the latter must feel as if he were a satyr.¹¹⁴ Whoever views the vase (young or old) is also a satyr, or at least may become a satyr on certain circumstances: this is why satyrs are depicted at various stages of maturity. Evidently, one of these occasions is the *thiasos*, where the user of the vase, assimilated with the satyr, becomes a participant in the epiphany of Dionysos, the bearer of grapes. Bunches of grapes – a prelude to wine – potentially contain wine, but must be „dismembered“ – destroyed – to be transformed into wine.¹¹⁵

Satyrs and brides in the *thiasos*

Another common iconographic theme of the *thiasos* – in addition to the one that includes the mule rider treated in the next chapter – involved Dionysos at the center of the image with a female figure of nuptial or matronly type standing in front of him with a dignified and composed appearance. She could never be confused with the companion of the satyr. As previously noted,¹¹⁶ this figure could either represent Ariadne or a prototypical wife meeting Dionysos, with the assumption that the bride is about to undergo an existential *metamorphosis* and, thus, enter into the realm of the god. The fact that this encounter with Dionysos implies a passage and a transformation is confirmed by two depictions of the Affector in which Hermes is depicted between the god and the bride.¹¹⁷ Moreover, weddings are equated to passages, even from the male perspective: thus, on the other side of the *amphora* in Boston, we are faced

¹¹⁴ KUNZE-GÖTTE 1992, 155 f. On the *apostrophé* motif, see especially FRONTISI-DUCROUX 1995, 90 ff. and, applied to the satyr, 109 f.

¹¹⁵ An idea implied in many ancient literary testimonia: DARAKI 1985, 54 f.; KERÉNYI 1994, 55 f., 157 f. and 169; NOEL 2000, 79. Cfr. also MASSENZIO 1969, 81 (with relative notes, translated from Italian): „The dismembering of Dionysos and the boiling of pieces of his body are placed in relation with the grape harvest and the crushing of grapes.“

¹¹⁶ Dionysos 2001, 122 f.

¹¹⁷ *Amphora* Boston 01.8053: ADDENDA 63 (246.72); Dionysos 2001, 136 and 162 fig. 80; *Amphora* Baltimore 48.11: ADDENDA 63 (245.69).

by Dionysos, the intermediary Hermes as well as an unidentified male figure, evidently a bridegroom.¹¹⁸

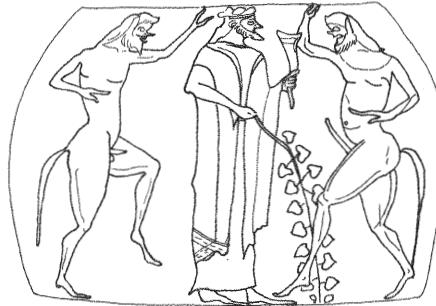


Fig. 22



Fig. 23

The fact that this image means the introduction of a prototypical bride to Dionysos is supported by a Siana-type cup attributed to the Heidelberg Painter,¹¹⁹ where, between the deity and the woman, at the center of the image, is a musician-satyr. The other side of the same cup shows a very different Dionysos in front of a similar satyr. Here, in fact, there is no detachment between the participants in the *thiasos* and the god: he

¹¹⁸ The male analogy of the prototypical bride, identified by some as Ikarios, is also found in the work of the Heidelberg Painter: Dionysos 2001, 56 and 78 fig. 28.

¹¹⁹ Copenhagen, National Museum 5179: ADDENDA 17 (64.24); Dionysos 2001, 57 f. and 79 figs. 29 f.

dances passionately to the sound of the *aulós* together with the satyrs and nymphs, whose short dresses are similar to those of the companions of the grotesque dancers but clearly different from that of the bride.



Fig. 24

In the realm of Dionysos, the satyrs are the ones who greet the bride: this is demonstrated on the *amphora* in Munich upon which Dionysos is depicted on one side of the vase and the bride on the other; each stands between two satyrs who greet them while dancing (*Figs. 22 and 23*).¹²⁰ For the rest, these *thiasos* satyrs with a bride behave exactly like the ones in a normal *thiasos*: there are those who greet Dionysos while dancing¹²¹, those who address the viewer,¹²² and even tailless satyrs who allude, as we have just hypothesized,¹²³, to the transformation of the dancer into a satyr (*Fig. 24*).¹²⁴ The nuptial value is equally present in many archaic depictions of the mule rider,¹²⁵ including the most ancient version on the aforementioned Corinthian miniature *amphora* as well as on the François vase where in front of Dionysos we find Aphrodite, the promised, but unwilling bride of Hephaistos. We may, therefore, consider the „bridal“ *thiasos* to be a variant of the normal *thiasos*, which can sometimes – but, as we shall see, not necessarily – be combined with the mule rider. Based upon this, we can conclude that if the *thiasos* is the most generic and typical way to represent Dionysos and if the *thiasos* is

¹²⁰ Munich 1394: ABV 135.42; Dionysos 2001, 117, 148 fig. 49, and 149 fig. 50.

¹²¹ Examples: Dionysos 2001, 148 ff. figs. 48, 51, 57.

¹²² Example: Dionysos 2001, 162 f. fig. 80 f.

¹²³ See pp. 29 f. and 33.

¹²⁴ Louvre F 32: Dionysos 2001, 116 and 148 fig. 48.

¹²⁵ But seems to have disappeared in Red Figure: BRON 1989; LIMC IV.2 (1988) 391 – 401 (A. Hermary).

the environment in which the god appears to satyrs and men (i.e., men who feel like satyrs), it follows that the „bridal“ *thiasos* indicates that weddings are one of the occasions in which the deity can be met.

The satyrs between Dionysos and men

In all variants the satyrs play their same role as privileged interlocutors of Dionysos and as intermediaries between the human and mythical worlds. This dual role is expressed simultaneously and in a particularly effective way in an image by the Affecter where the satyr to the left on side B, in addressing the viewer, points to the god with his extended finger as if to say: „Look, here is Dionysos!“¹²⁶ Namely (and this hypothesis is no longer risky): recognizing in me and, recognizing in you a satyr, you shall meet Dionysos (Fig. 25).

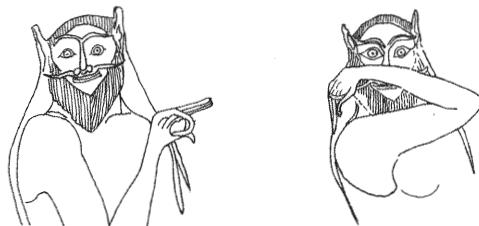


Fig. 25

From this we can now assume that the best way not only to experience the presence of, but to see Dionysos, was to become a satyr. In fact, it is always one of the satyrs who addresses the viewer of the vase in depictions of the *thiasos*, never the deity himself (and never the female companion of the satyr).¹²⁷ This opportunity to approach the god was obviously reserved to males. For women, encounters with Dionysos occurred under different circumstances established, as we shall see, at a later moment.¹²⁸ This contrasts with what happens in Kleitias' procession

¹²⁶ Orvieto, Museo Civico 240: ADDENDA 63 (246.73). The other satyr in the same image looks at the viewer while concealing his mouth by his inflected arm. Could this gesture mean: “I saw, but I don’t speak”, thus evoking initiatory experiences? Cf. my interpretation of Semeles’ gesture on the Naples cup of the Kallis Painter (Dionysos 2001, 177).

¹²⁷ It is not accidental that satyrs are more often represented with frontal face than other characters: KORSHAK 1987, 45 ff.

¹²⁸ Dionysos 2001, 226 f.

of the gods, where Dionysos himself addresses the viewer:¹²⁹ but Kleitias' work is exceptional in other respects as well.¹³⁰

Returning to the satyrs, what else can we gain from the evolution of the iconographic formula of the *thiasos* depicted in archaic vase paintings? First of all that the process of becoming a satyr could be an individual experience: we must recall the *amphora* in Munich that introduces the motif around 560 B.C. with a single satyr in front of Dionysos.¹³¹ But, beginning with Lydos satyrs are generally represented in groups: becoming a satyr was therefore something that happened collectively. The fact that one could become a satyr during a *thiasos* is suggested not only by satyrs who address the viewer of the vase but also by several examples in which among the satyrs are some (still?) without a tail.¹³² Such a collective experience can only be imagined in a ritual context, or at least a strongly ritualized situation, like, for example, the *symposion*. It is no coincidence that satyrs, including those who partake in *symposia*, become one of the preferred subjects on red figure cups (i.e. the most typical *symposion*-vases).¹³³

Before concluding this chapter we must ask ourselves if Dionysos the peace-maker presented by Sophilos and Kleitias is coherent with the epiphany of Dionysos in the *thiasos*? The images described here indicate this notion clearly: the satyrs (and their female companions in the *thiasos*) could see Dionysos and this vision was a source of joy. But is it plausible that the champion of order and continuity in the *polis* could make them euphoric?

Much more probable is that seeing Dionysos meant something more and even personal. Something that the depiction of Dionysos on the *dinos* of Sophilos suggests, but which was more explicit on the François vase:¹³⁴ the fact that order and continuity were not possible without Dionysian metamorphoses on both the cosmic and individual level. Every *metamorphosis* implies that before a new condition can be installed, the previous condition must end: in other words, it implies death. Therefore, seeing Dionysos meant experiencing an end that was followed by a beginning: a good motive for the participants in the *thiasos* to be happy by the epiphany of Dionysos.

¹²⁹ He also does this when represented only as a mask: FRONTISI-DUCROUX 1991, 177-188.

¹³⁰ See pp. 19 and 47; ISLER-KERÉNYI 1997a.

¹³¹ P. 35 fig. 17.

¹³² Dionysos 2001, 116 and 147 f. figs. 47-48. We will see another in the *thiasos* which accompanies the mule rider: See p. 56 note 169. See also KUNZE-GÖTTE 1992, 154 f.

¹³³ See p. 85.

¹³⁴ Dionysos 2001, 89.

At this point the similarity between the symposial *thiasos* of the vases and the *thiasos* of Bacchic initiations becomes self-evident. This similarity would also emerge in later phases of the iconography of satyrs, about which we cannot avoid a discussion.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ See pp. 73 and 95 f.

5

THE SATYRS AND THE MULE RIDER

Of the two contexts in which satyrs play a significant role in the decades following the François vase, the numerically most important, the Dionysian *thiasos*, was treated in the previous chapter together with a variant involving a bride. The other context is one that I prefer to call the „mule rider“ rather than the „return of Hephaistos“, given the fact that the rider can be unequivocally identified as Hephaistos in many instances, but is clearly not Hephaistos in other cases.¹³⁶

We have already considered the best known version of this iconographic theme on the François vase. This is often considered the prototype, at least in Attica, of the series of mule riders: careful observation of vase paintings reveals that the vase painted by Kleitias actually represents an exception to the rule. In fact, there are few examples in which the mule rider, even when he can be unequivocally identified with Hephaistos, is associated with the figure of Hera. The presence of Hera is exceptional, while the presence of Dionysos is normal. Moreover, even where Dionysos is not actually present, his attributes are and the scene in which the mule rider moves is clearly Dionysian.

The motif of the mule rider first appeared in vase paintings about a generation prior to the François vase on a Corinthian miniature-amphora dated to the early 6th century B.C.¹³⁷ The theme became more common around 550 B.C. and would be part of the repertoire until the 4th century.¹³⁸ It is important to note his presence not only in the production of Athens and Corinth, but on Laconian, Ionian and Chalcidian vases as well:¹³⁹ the mule rider was not exclusively an Athenian iconographic feature but more generally an archaic Greek phenomenon.

Although not comparable to popular and more numerous subjects, as for example some exploits of Herakles, it is the most common among the Dionysian themes after the *thiasos*. It would certainly be worth pursuing a deeper typological study in order to identify the traditions of specific workshops or influences between artists. In a global consideration of the known and published material¹⁴⁰ there is an impres-

¹³⁶ Dionysos 2001, 92. Cfr. BRON 1989.

¹³⁷ Athens, National Museum 664; Dionysos 2001, 43 and 70 fig. 13.

¹³⁸ For a general survey: SCHÖNE 1987, 24-47.

¹³⁹ LIMC IV (1988) s.v. Hephaistos (A. Hermary).

¹⁴⁰ LIMC IV (1988) s.v. Hephaistos (A. Hermary); LIMC III (1986) s.v. Dionysos (C. Gasparri); SCHÖNE 1987, 24 ff.; BRON 1989; SHAPIRO 1995, plates 74 and 75.

sion of great variety: rather than having simply adopted a standard iconographic formula, each vase painter felt free to occasionally modify the structure and the components, to enrich or reduce the variables. This indicates a constantly renewed interest for the subject of the image.

This variability leads us to believe that vase painters were interested more in the ride than in the rider. Two facts are especially indicative: mule riders do not always have to be Hephaistos but can also be Dionysos himself, an anonymous ephebe, a satyr or even a woman;¹⁴¹ and the role of Dionysos, when he is present and when he is not the rider, is not always the same. He may lead, welcome or follow the procession of the rider, or even, as we shall see shortly, in the case of Lydos, appear in the *thiasos* during the cavalcade. We get the impression that the cavalcade may take place not only in a definite mythological context, when the rider is a divinity, but in ritual contexts as well.¹⁴²

If the ritual ride was perceived as a reflection of the mythical ride of Hephaistos, which we know took place upon his return, we must assume that the meaning was to transport someone – metaphorically or actually – from outside, from the countryside into the city.

The mule ride: myth or ritual?¹⁴³

The satyr is the most common component of the iconographic formula after the mule rider, and his position immediately following the mule recurs, almost as if to emphasize his kinship with this animal. Possibly coeval, if not earlier than the famous version by Kleitias, is an *amphora* of Panathenaic shape where the scene spreads over both sides of the vase.¹⁴⁴ This depiction could be interpreted as the return of Hephaistos, given the presence of an enthroned matronly figure who might be identified as Hera. Among the other characters on the same side of the vase is another female figure who could be, like Aphrodite on the François vase, the promised bride of the rider.¹⁴⁵ But the mule rider who advances on the opposite side following Dionysos is a nude ephebe, quite different from

¹⁴¹ Examples of female riders: *Oinochoe* Louvre F 351: VILLANUEVA-PUIG 1988, 41 and 55 fig. 4; Neck *Amphora* Würzburg 222: ADDENDA 105 (405.20); *Amphora* New York 26.60.29: ADDENDA 101 (384.17); Late black-figured *lekythoi* from the necropolis of Agrigento: Veder greco 336 and 346 f.

¹⁴² Hypothesis proposed by SCHÖNE 1987, 45 and BRON 1989, 165.

¹⁴³ On the problems related to the use of these terms cfr. CALAME 1991.

¹⁴⁴ Oxford 1920.107: ADDENDA 24 (89.2); SHAPIRO 1995, tab. 75 c-d; Dionysos 2001, 91 note 39. The „*amphora of Panathenaic shape*“ should not be confused with the „*Panathenaic prize-amphora*“ even if there is a close relationship between the two: BENTZ 1998, 18 ff.

¹⁴⁵ This interpretation, first proposed by Wilamowitz, was contested by SHAPIRO 1995, 8.

the Hephaistos we know (*Fig.26*). Hephaistos was a son of Hera: why should he not have been depicted as an ephebe? More credible, however, is the hypothesis that in this case, too, we are faced by a ritual allusion.

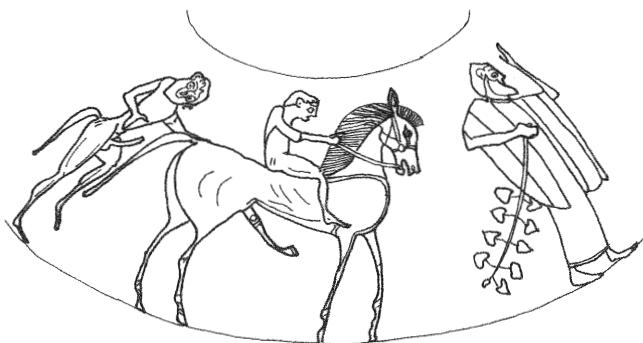


Fig. 26

Rituals, by definition, take place in an intermediate level between the human and divine realms. Human beings are the protagonists, but divine models are always mentally present: every mule rider repeats and reflects the return of Hephaistos. The painted image, whose nature is evidently not photographic but emblematic and allusive, is more than any other artistic genre capable of expressing this particularity of a ritual situation.¹⁴⁶ For this reason, the simultaneous presence of figures from the tangible world, as for example the ephebe rider, and of imaginary figures, such as Dionysos and the satyr, becomes completely natural. The representation in question may, therefore, be read without difficulty as the admission, celebrated ritually, of an anonymous and prototypical ephebe¹⁴⁷ into the *polis*: the vehicle of the image, the *amphora* of Panathenaic shape, reinforces this hypothesis.¹⁴⁸ The ephebe mule rider is not an isolated phenomenon, but recurs in several depictions from the third quarter of the century, for example, in accurately executed miniaturistic representations on the rim of a pair of *amphorae*.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ See p. 30 note 86.

¹⁴⁷ Prototypical in the sense that it is an anonymous representation of an entire category of characters.

¹⁴⁸ On the association of the *amphora* with the *polis* rather than the *symposion* – especially in the case of Panathenaic *amphorae*: Dionysos 2001, 113-117.

¹⁴⁹ Louvre E 733bis (= F 200): ABV 138.5; LIMC IV.2 (1988) 394 Hephaistos 138c; Basle BS 495: Para 187, 3; LIMC IV.2 (1988) Hephaistos 138d.

The problem of this reading lies in the fact that there are no explicit attestations of the existence of such a ritual in Athens, although the sources available to us are too lacunar to dismiss this possibility.¹⁵⁰ Actually, the existence of such a ritual would be in perfect agreement with our Solonian interpretation of the return of Hephaistos: if Hephaistos is representative for the category of children of Athenian citizens who were denied full citizenship, but who were offered the chance by the *polis* to be integrated at a juridically inferior level, the existence of a corresponding ritual of integration is likely. A ritual that involved riding into the city on an appropriate animal that was inferior to a horse (the symbol of citizens holding full rights), the admission to a *symposion* (symbol of the *polis*) and perhaps also a wedding – or the promise of marriage – with one of the daughters of a citizen family that had escaped exposition after birth but had no chance to marry a citizen.¹⁵¹

One of the sources cited by all scholars concerned with the festive calendar of Athens is the ancient frieze, unfortunately poorly preserved and not sufficiently documented by photographs or drawings, on the exterior wall of a small church located in the center of Athens.¹⁵² In the section referring to the month of *Gamelion* (during which weddings were normally celebrated and which corresponds to December/January)¹⁵³ a young Dionysian rider can be distinguished.¹⁵⁴ However, opinions about the animal conflict: Deubner maintains that this is a goat, but cites Svoronos to whom the form of the tail suggested a ram. If it were a ram, however, it lacks its characteristic horns.¹⁵⁵ The hypothesis that this might not be a goat nor a ram, but a mule, has not yet been proposed and requires verification. The lively motion of the animal does not correspond to the scheme of the subject used in the 6th and 5th century

¹⁵⁰ PARKE 1977, 15 f.

¹⁵¹ As for non-Attic representations of the cavalcade, we cannot exclude that they reflect analogous conceptions of Hephaistos: in fact, the political situation of the relative *poleis* was analogous.

¹⁵² Named Hagios Eleutherios in the older literature but Panagia Gorgoepikoos in LIMC VI.1 (1992) 482, s.v. Menses 2 (D. Parrish). DEUBNER 1932, 248 ff. plates 35-40; citation of Svoronos: p. 251 (note 4). The reading as a ram was adopted by MIKALSON 1975, 109, that as a goat from SIMON 1983, 100.

¹⁵³ PARKE 1977, 26 f. (sequence of months) and 104 ff. (month Gamelion).

¹⁵⁴ According to DEUBNER 1932, 251, the rider holds a *thyrsos* and an crown, something that cannot be verified given the poor conservation of the frieze and the impossibility of obtaining photographs that are unequivocal. Could we be sure that the rider is not a woman? Cfr. LIMC VI.2 (1992) 257.

¹⁵⁵ Compare with the goat and the ram in another segment of the same frieze: LIMC VI.2 (1992) 257 below (described by DEUBNER 1932, 252 numbers 19-22).

B.C.: but this may be due to the fact that the frieze is much later.¹⁵⁶ The mule rider on a poorly preserved frieze in a Hellenistic necropolis on Rhodes, and convincingly identified as Hephaistos, is more faithful to the original scheme and may serve as an iconographic link.¹⁵⁷

In terms of the *amphora* of Panathenaic shape under discussion here, where the rider may either be a young Hephaistos or a prototypical ephebe, the most interesting element is the ithyphallic satyr who follows the mule. Not only does he follow the mule, but he touches it with his left hand, while gesturing with his right hand as if to indicate his erect phallus. This gesture cannot be without meaning and, in fact, the vase painter of this image repeatedly represents pronounced gestures. The gesture of the right hand corresponds to the face of the satyr turned toward the viewer, who wantingly and inevitably must feel himself being summoned. If, in fact, the rider was Hephaistos, a satyr following his mule should not be surprising: this is the case in the version of Kleitias and the idea should not be dismissed here.

If, instead, we maintain the other hypothesis, according to which, while bearing a mythological allusion, the image should be read as reflecting a ritual and the *thiasos* with the mule rider is the reflection of certain rites of integration, the idea that together with the ephebe welcomed into the *polis*, the satyrs would also enter the city becomes particularly interesting. With them entered a wild and unquieting element that demanded direct contact with those who viewed and used the vase. Regardless of whether we prefer to read this depiction in light of mythology or ritual, the satyr who, turning toward the viewer, establishes a direct and unequivocal connection outside the image, cancels all mental separation between the mythical and human level.¹⁵⁸

The mule ride by Lydos

We have already indicated how, at the latest with the *krater* of Kleitias and Ergotimos, the mule rider enters the repertoire of Athenian vase painters. Depictions, initially not so numerous, tend to increase, but they also become more simplified in the final decades of the century.

¹⁵⁶ For dating cfr. LIMC VI.1 (1992) 482: "Variously dated from 3rd cent. B.C. to 3rd cent. A.D." and 498 ("Hellenistic period"). I wish to thank Maria Elena Gorriini for having provided me with photographs. With regard to the animal, I see a long tail; thus, certainly it is not a goat.

¹⁵⁷ GULDAGER BILDE 1999, 237 ff. From our point of view, it is interesting that the author proposes a ritual function of the space in which the frieze is located (page 242 f.).

¹⁵⁸ KUNZE-GÖTTE 1992, 154 already noted that this permeability between the divine and human realms is a characteristic of the Dionysian repertoire.

The version of Lydos on his famous column *krater* in New York¹⁵⁹ merits particular attention, not only because it is one of the earliest, dated to just before the middle of the century, but also because it is exceptionally well-crafted and sumptuous.¹⁶⁰ The artistic range of the work suggests that the iconographic choices of the vase painter, one of the greatest of the second quarter of the century, were made purposefully and exactingly.

The scene is arranged without interruption around the entire body of the vase as if the handles presented no obstacle: it is, therefore, difficult to establish whether or not a hierarchy exists between the two sides. Careful observation of the lateral areas suggests that the side bearing the mule rider had priority over the opposite side. Of the many participants in the procession no fewer than five of those who precede him turn toward the mule rider (i.e., to the left) as if welcoming him. In contrast, on the side with Dionysos the figures all move uniformly to the right, giving the impression that this part of the procession was conceived as a continuation of the other and not vice versa.

The procession is formed of a full crowd of satyrs and nymphs who advance dancing, precisely 16 satyrs and 9 nymphs: it is evident that the vase painter gives more weight to the satyrs than to the nymphs. The latter carry animal skins above their red *chiton*. They are different kinds of women from those who inhabit the human world; they obviously belong to the world of the wild. It is also clear that they are huntresses, although the one located below the handle to the left of the rider uses a live snake as a belt. These women are evidently connected to the animal world by a special relationship. The only other attributes of the nymphs are bunches of grapes: we will soon return to this detail. In contrast to their forerunners from the beginning of the century,¹⁶¹ these nymphs are not the prey or victims of the satyrs, nor are they, as those on the François vase, objects to be taken and carried away. They are equal partners in the dance who are not easily accessible to the sexual appetites of the satyrs.

The more numerous satyrs do not make up a group: each of them moves independently and even their attributes are different: branches of ivy, shoots of grape vines, bunches of grapes, a serpent. One on each side carries a wineskin upon his shoulder, two play the *aulós*. This music

¹⁵⁹ New York 31.11.11: ADDENDA 29 (108.5); Dionysos 2001, 101. The same subject but differently executed is found on fragments of another *krater* attributed to Lydos, now in New York 1997.388: KOSSATZ-DEISSMANN 1991, 131-135.

¹⁶⁰ The black and white photographs do not do justice to this exquisite vase. Color reproductions, which obviously reflect the true nature of the vase, have in fact emphasized the red garments of the female figures: TIVERIOS 2002, 16 fig. 7.

¹⁶¹ See p. 11 ff.

clearly moves the procession along and creates a joyous atmosphere that pervades the entire scene: three satyrs take advantage, reaching a hand toward a nymph and highlighting the erotic and transgressive element of the dance. Three of the satyrs stand out, as we shall soon see, for their particularly significant behavior.

In this particularly rich and accurate image of the mule rider, in contrast to many other cases, the figure of a bride lacks: apparently both the cavalcade and the wedding are an optional, not indispensable, feature of the *thiasos*.

The mule rider does not possess any specific attribute of Hephaistos and his foot exhibits no anomaly: but the atmosphere of the image would suggest myth rather than ritual. However, the situation is not unequivocal: here too the mythical scenery opens toward the viewer by means of the satyr who immediately follows the rider and who occupies the very center of the image: is he the true protagonist? This satyr turns his face like a mask toward the exterior and the *apostrophé* is highlighted by his two raised arms that frame his head (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27

With this we are implicitly witnesses to two realms: the one involving the mule rider and the *thiasos* and the one of the external viewer of the image. The same phenomenon occurs on the other side of the vase: the *apostrophé* of one of the satyrs, the first after Dionysos (unfortunately almost illegible) is also found (Fig. 28). But, looking more carefully, there is also a third level: that of Dionysos. He does not participate in the flow of the procession. His hieratic immobility contrasts with the festive motion of the satyrs and the nymphs: it is enough to compare the figure of Dionysos with another personality located in the background, the satyr

who accompanies the mule rider. The hieratic rigidity of the god goes beyond the calmness that typically distinguishes him from his followers in a normal *thiasos*.¹⁶²

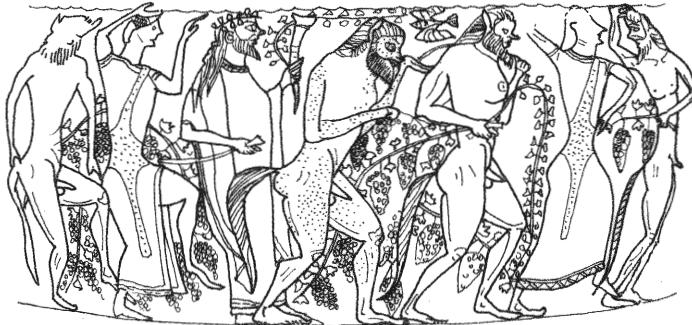


Fig. 28

This manner of presenting Dionysos can be explained when we place him in relation with one of the satyrs, the third among those who precede the god. This satyr, while moving to the right with the rest of the procession, turns around making the well known gesture of the *skopeuma*, expressing surprise in seeing something unexpectedly.¹⁶³ Dionysos suddenly appears to him as a rigid cult-figure: the epiphany of Dionysos opens the image toward a third level, the divine realm.

Lydos is, therefore, substantially in agreement with the Affector.¹⁶⁴ While he does not provide us with the elements necessary to decide whether the mule rider is really Hephaistos, with these three satyrs the vase painter suggests that the procession moves at an intermediate level between that of human beings (those who, while using the *krater*, look at the image and are addressed by the satyr) and that of Dionysos: even the cavalcade is an occasion for the users of the image to come into contact with the divinity. Judging by the numerical relation between the various types of *thiasos*, however, the participation of the mule rider in the *thiasos* is more occasional than indispensable: it remains one of the

¹⁶² And distinguishes him even more from the cases – very rare in Black Figure, more frequent in Red Figure – in which the god dances in the *thiasos*: *Kylix* Copenhagen, National Museum 5179: ADDENDA 17 (64.24); *Dionysos* 2001, 57 and 79 fig. 30; *Amphora* Würzburg 265: ADDENDA 43 (151.22).

¹⁶³ See p. 36.

¹⁶⁴ See p. 43 note 126 (Fig.25).

occasions in which Dionysos appears and, for the viewer, to identify with the satyr.

The distinction between these three levels – that of tangible reality, that of the *thiasos* and that of the god –, the presentation of the *thiasos* as a means of communication between the human and divine world, and the role attributed to the satyrs as intermediaries are not the only messages contained in this image. There is also the message related to the gift *par excellence* of Dionysos: wine. The concept of wine – and of the preliminaries of wine – is suggested through a variety of symbols: vines (vine shoots in the hand of Dionysos and one of the satyrs who precedes him); grapes (many bunches of grapes held by satyrs and nymphs); and wine (wineskins and drinking horns held by Dionysos and the mule rider). Moreover, with the shoot of ivy held by Dionysos together with his drinking horn, which is also carried by other participants in procession there is an allusion to the wild world, antithetical to grape vines. The *thiasos* thus recalls all the phases involved in wine from the plant itself to the liquid contained in the *krater*: this beverage was transported from outside, from the place where the satyrs and the nymphs reside, passing through the rural strip of land surrounding the town, to the city where the *symposium* is held and where the *krater* itself functions.

It is worth discussing again the bunch of grapes that Lydos, in contrast to virtually all other black figure vase painters, presents detached from the grape vine. We saw it at the center of one of the *thiasoi* of Lydos.¹⁶⁵ Why dwell upon this step in the way leading from vine to wine, or more precisely, ivy to wine? In contrast to vines, which are cut but not destroyed, bunches of grapes must be destroyed, dismembered, in order to be transformed into wine: the bunch of grapes points to a killing – a metaphorical death and a metaphorical rebirth.¹⁶⁶ This point will be discussed in the next chapter.

Lydos is also distinguished from his colleagues by the fact that instead of a *kantharos*, he prefers to give Dionysos, as well as the satyrs, a drinking horn. We do not know if this was a meaningful choice or an aesthetic preference. However, there is the fact that the horn and the *kantharos*, while both are drinking vessels strongly tied to Dionysian ritual, are not completely equivalent: with respect to the *kantharos*, manufactured by human hand, the horn, given by nature, represents a prior stage in humanity's evolution from a life of wilderness to coexistence in a civilized world. Dionysos is for Lydos a divinity of the beginnings who helps human beings to separate themselves from the realm of animals.

¹⁶⁵ Fragmentary *amphora* in the Louvre Cp 10634: ADDENDA 30 (110.31); see p. 37 f. (*Fig. 19*).

¹⁶⁶ DARAKI 1985, 54 f.

Given the mental association of the horn with sacrifice – in order to obtain it, the animal must be killed – it is with Dionysos that Lydos associates the institution of codified relationships between the human beings and the gods.¹⁶⁷ This interpretation is in harmony with, but significantly deeper than, the image given to Dionysos by Sophilos and Kleitias.

Lydos also highlights features of the satyrs, which were already revealed by his predecessors and his contemporaries: the taming of male sexuality as an effect of the presence of Dionysos; their role as intermediaries between human beings and Dionysos in the *thiasos*.¹⁶⁸ Lydos calls our attention to another fact: the satyrs are associated more closely than the mule rider with the process of making wine. This will be confirmed in the next chapter.

In any case, it would not be appropriate to place satyrs strictly within a mythical realm separated in time and space from the human world. On the contrary, they were especially close to those who used the *krater* in real life: furthermore, they were indispensable for the relationship between men and Dionysos. This last point can be clarified by images of the mule rider in which grotesque dancers are present in addition to the satyrs.

Satyrs and Dionysian dancers in the mule ride

In this case, too, instead of describing well-known examples, one after the other,¹⁶⁹ it is more productive to focus upon the two more careful depictions, about which we can assume that the iconographic choices

¹⁶⁷ Dionysos 2001, 67 f.

¹⁶⁸ The satyr who, following the mule rider, addresses the viewer of the image, although this is not the rule, appears in other notable examples, for instance on a band-cup in New York, decorated by one of the most talented vase painters of Little-master cups (New York 17.230.5, ADDENDA 51 /188.1 below/) or on the shoulder of a *hydria* in Florence (inv. 3809: CVA Florence 5, plate 11.2).

¹⁶⁹ *Dinos* Louvre E 876: ADDENDA 24 (90.1); Cité des images 132 fig. 187a-c; *Amphora* Louvre E 860: ADDENDA 27 (103.111); Dionysos 2001, 140 and 168 figs. 92 f.; *Amphora* Christchurch (New Zealand) CUC 42/57: ADDENDA 35 (133.7bis); *Amphora* Louvre F 3: ABV 297.12; Dionysos 2001, 116 note 30, figs. 51 f. The mule rider is unequivocally Hephaistos, bearded, with a double axe in his hand. This *amphora* is attributed to the same painter (Painter of Berlin 1686) as the following: the fact that in both cases one of the satyrs lacks a tail is not coincidental, but probably refers to the *metamorphosis* from a dancer to a satyr that is unfolding; *Amphora* Bowdoin 15.44: ABV 297.13; HERBERT 1964, 57 no. 143 plate 20: the side with the mule rider (young, with a normal foot and no additional attributes) between two satyrs (one of which lacks a tail) and two nymphs is depicted; the opposite side bears Dionysos in his *thiasos*; Column krater in S. Petersburg 1524 (209): ADDENDA 84 (310); Fragment of a *dinos* in Würzburg Ha 166a: CVA 1, plate 44,1; Cité des images 133 ff. fig. 188 (Fig. 30).

were not casual but quite intentional. The first one occurs on an *amphora* in Paris, Tyrrhenian in form, but with an atypical kind of decoration: the depictions only occupy the upper half of the vase.¹⁷⁰ Below them, in the zone generally reserved for animal friezes, the *amphora* is simply painted black. This decision of the vase painter, at least partially contemporary of Lydos,¹⁷¹ is a clue to his will to give prominence to the images, which are richer, more original and even more problematic than those on standard Tyrrhenian vases.

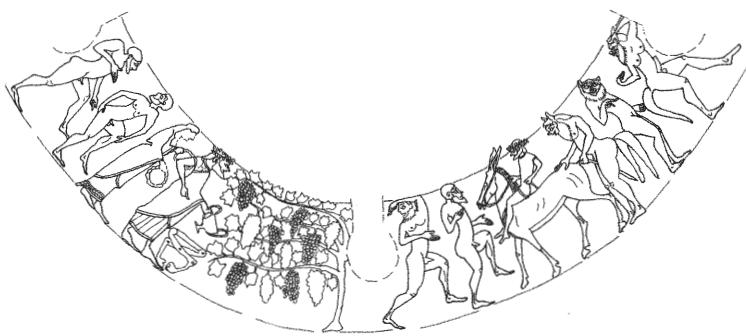


Fig. 29

One side of the vase is dominated by a young mule rider who moves toward the left and does not exhibit the typical characteristics of Hephaistos (Fig. 29). Behind him are three satyrs: the first is busy, in the erotic sense of the word, with the mule. The other two are dancing and the one closest to the center of the scene addresses the external viewer. To the left, the mule rider is welcomed by a pair of dancers. On the opposite side, the entire right half of the image is occupied by a large grape vine with bunches of grapes and leaves of various colors: an extraordinary vine. Dionysos stands on the other side of a stool with a *kantharos* in his hand; a female figure holding a pair of crowns follows him. Closing the scene to the left are two more dancers.

¹⁷⁰ Louvre E 860: see previous note.

¹⁷¹ KLUIVER 1995, 67 no. 48 attributes this to the Timiades Painter, dating it to just before 560-555 B.C. (see page 82). But the date of Tyrrhenian *amphorae*, discussed by KLUIVER 1995, 79 ff. remains controversial. While the new dating proposed according to arguable evidence by Carpenter seems too late, that of Kluiver, who places them between 565 and 545 (o.c. and 1996, 30 ff.) may be too early: CANCIANI 1997.

We do not have enough information to determine if this rider is Hephaistos or his ritual alter-ego. Satyrs are normally attributed to a mythological level, while dancers generally refer to a ritual event.¹⁷² But the observations made above warn us that we cannot always separate two realms that in the view of the ancient user of the image probably overlapped and even merged. As in other instances, we find ourselves in a grey zone in which satyrs and dancers meet: indeed, the same Tyrrenian vase painter was responsible for examples of satyrs and dancers who not only coexist in the same space, but actually interact.¹⁷³

This environment is explicitly attributed to Dionysos: in fact, the not obvious addition of a stool suggests that the god has just risen from a seated position (as he is normally represented in his vineyard)¹⁷⁴ in order to welcome the mule ride. Therefore, in contrast to the return of Hephaistos recounted by Kleitias, the goal of this cavalcade is Dionysos's vineyard, not Olympus.¹⁷⁵ But we shall see that the two places are metaphoric equivalents: they both signify a happy destination.

Nevertheless, the rider of this scene, as in the return of Hephaistos, is followed by satyrs. And, as on the *krater* of Lydos and in other instances,¹⁷⁶ one of the satyrs addresses the external viewer, confirming that the cavalcade represented in the scene directly concerns the viewer. The presence of the dancers is not obvious, nor the fact that they are near Dionysos and not the satyrs, who would be, as we shall see, the workers in Dionysos's vineyard. It has been suggested that these characters have to be identified as participants of a chorus who perform the story of Hephaistos.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps this would resolve the problem of the simultaneous presence of satyrs and dancers – and with it the previously mentioned interference between the two realms in this depiction. But, we still need to understand why the occasion for the user of the image to identify himself with satyrs and, hence, gain access to Dionysos, was the return of Hephaistos, or in any event, a mule ride. This will be addressed later in our investigation.

¹⁷² This is the interpretation proposed by GHIRON-BISTAGNE 1976, 219.

¹⁷³ KLUIVER 1995, 67 f. no. 49 fig. 39, no. 50 fig. 42, and no. 57 fig. 41.

¹⁷⁴ Examples are treated in the next chapter: *Amphora* Boston 63.952; *Amphora* Villa Giulia 2609.

¹⁷⁵ Cfr. HEDREEN 1992, 22: referring to a moment preceding the same history or another history of which no written record exists. This possibility cannot be dismissed.

¹⁷⁶ *Hydria* Florence 3809: see note 168.

¹⁷⁷ Cfr. HEDREEN 1992, 135 f.

From *komos* to *thiasos*¹⁷⁸

The second example to be considered with greater attention is the rim of a *dinos* dating to the end of the 6th century.¹⁷⁹ This was the only part preserved – and was also the only zone that bore figured decoration – of a *dinos* that was otherwise painted black.¹⁸⁰ The exterior of the rim is decorated with ivy leaves, while the interior area of the neck bears five ships. The waves on which the ships navigate were originally likened to the wine contained in the vase, illustrating one of the most common metaphors of *symposia*: wine is like the sea and one's participation in a *symposium* was equivalent to the precarious, but happy condition of those traveling over the high sea.¹⁸¹



Fig. 30

There are a number of figures on the ill-preserved surface of the rim (Fig. 30). At first glance there is a sense of uniformity. Who studies the image more carefully, however, will soon distinguish a mule rider, apparently young and anonymous, to whom a satyr points the way toward a seated Dionysos with a horn and vine in hand and in the presence of Hermes. This group, obviously intended to be the fulcrum of the depiction, is framed by dancing couples of satyrs and nymphs: there are four to the left, behind Dionysos, and three to the right, behind the mule rider. One of the satyrs to the right displays a drinking vessel, while one of the nymphs holds a wineskin and a jug. Of the seven nymphs, five wear animal skins. Vines of ivy or grape (the minuscule dimension of the image does not allow us to distinguish) are carried by some of the satyrs and nymphs.

¹⁷⁸ *Komos* means a group of dancing characters leading to or coming from a *symposium*. *Thiasos* means the group of male and female dancers around Dionysos in vase-painting.

¹⁷⁹ Würzburg Ha 166a: CVA 1, plate 44,1; Cité des images 133 ff. fig. 188.

¹⁸⁰ Cfr. the coeval *dinos* by the Antimenes Painter in Madrid 10902: BUROW 1989, 25 plates 80c.d., 81 f.

¹⁸¹ Dionysos 2001, 185-188.

The fourteen figures that follow are grotesque dancers of the well-known type which first appear at the beginning of the century. These characters, too, move in mostly male couples to the sound of the lyre played by one of them. The only two female figures cannot be distinguished from the nymphs, partners of the satyrs: a final clue – if there were a need – as to the identity of the dancers and satyrs.¹⁸² The fact that the setting of this dance is a *symposion* is clearly expressed by the containers placed on the floor among the figures: more or less on axis with Dionysos is a *krater* and beside it two pitchers and a cup. As a touch of originality, the depiction also includes a pair of dogs which, in this case, allude to the *symposion* as well as to the hunt. One of the dancers carries a wineskin, another holds a drinking horn: these attributes, like the vine shoots, contribute toward an impression of uniformity in this depiction.

In reference to the Tyrrhenian *amphora* described above, it should be noted that this mule rider is not located in Dionysos's vineyard but at a *symposion*. The presence of Hermes underscores the fact that the cavalcade was equated with a passage from one state to another: in fact, the return to his family meant for Hephaistos too the achievement of a new and improved status, even though he was not equal to the other children of Zeus. This passage – the image clearly points to this fact – occurred at the *symposion*.¹⁸³ And being at a *symposion* – clearly declared by this *dinos* – is like being on the high sea, namely between two shores, in the undefined condition of *he who is no longer who he was and not yet who he will be*. This condition of euphoric “provisionality” expressed through the dance, is the same for the dancers (or komasts) and for satyrs.¹⁸⁴

The unity of the image despite the simultaneous and certainly not casual presence of such different characters – satyrs and dancers – highlighted by the vase painter through the attributes and the uninterrupted composition, leads us again to conclude that it was possible for dancers to be transformed into satyrs: i.e., they felt like a satyr or appeared to be like a satyr.

If this is correct, we must ask ourselves why the satyrs and dancers do not intermingle in this depiction but are clustered together: all the satyrs on the side dominated by Dionysos and all the dancers on the opposite side. A plausible response might be that this *metamorphosis*, induced by music and wine, was perceived as collective: the whole *komos* was transformed into a *thiasos*. And it was the *komos* transformed into a

¹⁸² See pp. 33 and 44.

¹⁸³ Cfr. also the earliest *dinos* in note 169.

¹⁸⁴ As confirmed by the work of LONSDALE 1993, 76 and passim.

thiasos that welcomed the mule rider in the world of Dionysos, whether it was a *symposion* or the mythical vineyard.

Who are the satyrs?

At this point we must confirm the response to the question posed at the beginning of this study. The satyr of the second quarter of the 6th century B.C. continued, like his early 6th century predecessor, to personify the violent and subversive characteristics that are connatural to males. The fact that sexual violence was perceived as a particularly significant form of violence in general is expressed by heads of satyrs used as emblems on the shields of characters engaged in battles, analogous to protomes of other aggressive figures such as wild boars or bulls (*Fig. 31*).¹⁸⁵

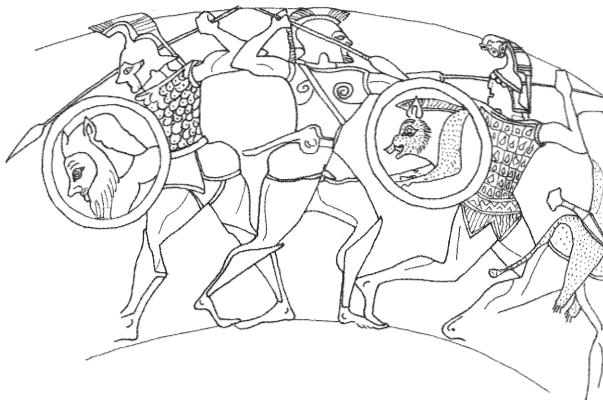


Fig. 31

With his entrance into the realm of Dionysos, the satyr was domesticated, his implicit violence controlled and sublimated. Moreover, the satyr himself was entrusted with the role as an intermediary between men and the god in the *thiasos*, despite his semi-bestial appearance. The *thiasos* may occur along with the mule ride. The latter, whether the rider is Hephaistos himself or a ritual alter-ego, is a way to celebrate the entrance

¹⁸⁵ Examples: Cup Rhodes 15430 (Amazonomachy): ADDENDA 53 (198.1); Amphora Christchurch 41/57 (shield of Kaineus decorated with a satyr-head): ADDENDA 81 (306.31bis). See also, for example: ATTULA 2003, especially plate 23.3 and CVA Basle 2, plate 1 (BS 436).

– sometimes highlighted by a wedding – of a person of inferior status to a *symposion*, and hence into the *polis*. We have seen that the destination of the mule rider, in addition to the *symposion*, may have been Dionysos's vineyard: this will be the subject of the next chapter.

The satyr is clearly a mythological being from the primordial epoch when in the presence of Hephaistos. But we have also established that the satyr should be identified with the viewer of the image who participated in the ritual consumption of wine during *symposia* and in the Dionysian dance in the *komos*.¹⁸⁶ Wine and dance provided everyone the opportunity to exceed the limits of the human condition and feel like a satyr: to activate potentially dangerous elements within himself that turn to be stimulating and creative when practiced within the sphere of Dionysos.

¹⁸⁶ JACCOTTET 2003, 70 f. (equation satyr-citizen already proposed) and 97 (taboos on this equation).

SATYRS IN THE VINEYARD OF DIONYSOS

Satyrs in vase painting are most often found in images depicting the *thiasos*, showing Dionysos with or without a bride facing him. This holds true for the 6th century and continues to be valid also in the 5th. We have seen that this type of image probably refers not to a specific myth – to an event that occurred in the distant past –, but to situations in the present that enabled men to identify with the satyrs and to encounter Dionysos. The return of Hephaistos to Olympus, however, is certainly a mythological event. Most representations of mule riders generally refer to a ritual cavalcade rather than its mythological prototype. Yet, it remains indisputable that in the view of vase painters satyrs existed not only in the present but also in earlier mythological times. And, given the fragmentary state of the evidence, we do not have sufficient clues to understand if the violent satyrs – aggressors of women – we met in the beginning of the 6th century and who disappeared after 570 B.C., were part of a mythological narrative.

The only other scene depicting satyrs in Attic vase painting of the 6th century that could refer to a mythological event is wine-making. The first vase painter of note who includes the scene in his repertoire – it cannot be excluded that he was the inventor of the scene¹⁸⁷ – is the Amasis Painter, one of the greatest among Attic vase painters of the third quarter of the 6th century, active alongside the famous Exekias (who, however, demonstrates a distinctly lower interest in Dionysian themes). To evaluate correctly his images of wine making, we must first understand how the Amasis Painter viewed Dionysos.¹⁸⁸

Thiasoi and satyrs by the Amasis Painter

Systematic analysis of the Amasis Painter's Dionysian representations does not reveal any fundamental divergence from the images of contemporary and previous vase painters in the understanding of the god. In this body of work, Dionysos is tied to the official *polis*.¹⁸⁹ What characterizes

¹⁸⁷ Cfr. the discussion on the dating of few representations that could precede the version by the Amasis Painter in SPARKES 1976, 48 (on figs. 2 and 3). The *lekythoi* of the Deianeira shape are the most ancient Attic *lekythoi*: but they may be comparatively recent if they wear framed images and were produced by provincial workshops (HASPELS 1936, 6).

¹⁸⁸ Dionysos 2001, 127-135.

¹⁸⁹ Dionysos 2001, 130.

the Amasis Painter with respect to his colleagues is his tendency to go beyond formulaic figural standards by making the various types of personages more precise and distinct. This is evident when he distinguishes between youthful and mature satyrs, as Lydos had already done, underlining, however, the homoerotic link.¹⁹⁰ He also distinguishes clearly between the various feminine types present in the Dionysian sphere: matron/bride, the companion of the satyrs and the sapphic – i.e. homoerotic – nymph.¹⁹¹ In representing the *komos*, i.e. the Dionysian dance by mortals, he continues to perfect the existing tradition artistically; it appears he was the first to add the figure of the god. In this way, he underlines the ritual character of the *komos* and confirms the inferences we have deduced from the *dinos* treated in the previous chapter: as dancing mortals can transform themselves into satyrs, so also the *komos* can become the *thiasos* and in this way the occasion for Dionysos to show himself.

On *amphorae* by the Amasis Painter we find images of the *thiasos* in the main field with figures of normal proportions, but miniature figures in the band that at times forms an upper cornice, or on the field on the neck. Two of the images in miniature, each depicting the standing or seated god in the midst of his dancing followers, do not reveal anything distinctive in terms of the norm of the time, as seen, for example, on Little-master cups.¹⁹² Also conforming to existing traditions are the images in the secondary fields of a neck-*amphora*: at the center is a bride who encounters Dionysos, flanked by dancing satyrs.¹⁹³

Unique among black figured pottery, however, is a representation in miniature from an *amphora*, recovered in the Heraion at Samos, of which only a few fragments remain (Fig. 32).¹⁹⁴ In the main panel are two couples, each with a satyr and a nude nymph, richly preened, in full amorous courtship. On top of the panel a miniature painting shows satyrs who play acrobatic games among themselves in front of an ithyphallic mule who, also an acrobat, is staying on his hind legs out straight. This subject finds parallels only in red figured vase painting:¹⁹⁵ for the first time, it evokes an atmosphere similar to that of Satyr Plays.

¹⁹⁰ Cfr. the side with Dionysos on the Würzburg 265 *amphora*, which we will consider on p. 69.

¹⁹¹ ISLER-KERÉNYI 1990a, 63 f.

¹⁹² Formerly Berlin 3210: ADDENDA 43 (151.21); Würzburg 265: ADDENDA 43 (151.22). Cfr. the Little-master cup, München 2212: Dionysos 2001, 203 fig. 97.

¹⁹³ Lausanne, Empiricos Collection: ADDENDA 43 (151.23).

¹⁹⁴ Samos K 898: KREUZER 1998, 5 and 119 no. 29 plate 8.

¹⁹⁵ Cfr., for example, a satyr and Hermes with a dancing goat, ARV 232.1 (Eucharides Painter): p. 87 note 277.



Fig. 32

Regardless of whether or not the listed images differ from the norm, it will be useful to reflect on the possible connection between secondary and main images; it is, in fact, very unlikely that a vase painter of the artistic weight of the Amasis Painter would have made these choices casually. The main fields of the neck-amphora are in no way Dionysian: they show young anonymous heroes who are receiving arms. A helmet is presented to one of these youths who is wearing an animal skin. In the right hand section of the same scene, a dog is visible. The actions refer, thus, to the moment in which the Athenian ephebe, having concluded the

phase of his initiation to the hunt,¹⁹⁶ assumes his new military role in the service of his *polis*. The image on the neck – Dionysos and a bride between satyrs – could therefore evoke two things: either the corresponding moment in female life,¹⁹⁷ or the next step in the life of a citizen, that of founding an *oikos*. This confirms the close link, already known by Sophilos, between Dionysos and the *polis*: the idea of *polis* being evoked through the support of the image.¹⁹⁸

In the case of another *amphora*, the main panel shows, beneath the *thiasos* with the bride, the same scene of the presentation of the arms, but in a more detailed version.¹⁹⁹ On the other side, the Dionysian motif occupies the big panel; whereas above young athletes, active in various sports, are portrayed. Here, too, the ephebic theme dominates, recurring on many contemporary *amphoras* by other painters and especially dear to the Amasis Painter. His images of Dionysos among ephebes – a subject not represented by other vase painters – are those that inform us that the god of wine oversaw the individual transformations even outside the *symposion* and was thus especially close to those youths who were in the process of becoming adults.²⁰⁰

Among the representations of satyrs in the *thiasos* the oldest is too fragmentary to reveal anything of use. It exhibited on its two sides similar representations of Dionysos standing among four dancing ithyphallic satyrs, of which some make a gesture of greeting.²⁰¹ Much more illuminating is the *thiasos* scene on another *amphora*,²⁰² not only because it introduces the female figure that meets Dionysos of her own accord, without male intervention, but also because it shows, like the fragments from Samos, the nude female in symbiosis with the satyrs. Whether they are courtesans or nymphs from the undomesticated world (who played the same role in mythology), we find the erotic value of their relationship strongly emphasized here.

Neither the nuptial value that the *thiasos* can assume nor the erotic one of the satyrs, is new. The Amasis Painter, however, articulates them in a more explicit manner. Eroticism, the state *par excellence* of the satyrs, reveals diverse variants: heterosexual as well as homosexual love,

¹⁹⁶ Cfr. the images of Dionysos among young hunters who return to the city by the Amasis Painter: Dionysos 2001, 131 ff.

¹⁹⁷ Cfr. BRULÉ 1987, 401: „Le mariage est à la fille ce que la guerre est au garçon“ (quoted from Vernant).

¹⁹⁸ Dionysos 2001, 130.

¹⁹⁹ Formerly Berlin 3210: ADDENDA 43 (151.21).

²⁰⁰ Dionysos 2001, *passim*, especially 142 f.

²⁰¹ Vatican (Gregoriano Etrusco) 17743: Dionysos 2001, 127 note 126.

²⁰² Formerly Berlin 3210: ADDENDA 43 (151.21); ISLER-KERÉNYI 2000, 562 fig. 8; Dionysos 2001, 129 and 158 fig. 69.

the *eros* of the *symposion* as well as that of matrimony. In addition, for the first time, he gives us a forecast of the atmosphere of Satyr Plays.

Wine making

The most revealing innovation offered to us by the oeuvre of the Amasis Painter is the imagery of wine making that we find in two complete and very accurate versions.²⁰³ The first, from around 540 B.C., shows on one side the *komos* of nymphs and dancers, embellished by the requisite rituals, with Dionysos at the center (*Fig. 33*). The god makes a gesture of greeting with this left hand; this gesture is returned, or so one could say, by the dancer and her companion approaching from the right. On the other side, Dionysos is represented in the same fashion, but not at the center of the image. A closely embraced satyr and woman are approaching him at a rapid pace. The principle event, the pressing and tasting of the must by two satyrs, occurs in the center of the painting, in front of Dionysos. A satyr playing the *aulós*, closes the scene at the left giving rhythm to the work. In each of the scenes, the women play the most active role introducing the men into the realm of Dionysos, a new and significant feature pointing to their special relationship to the god.²⁰⁴



Fig. 33

²⁰³ Basle Kä 420: ADDENDA 43 (151); Dionysos 2001, 128 and 157 figs. 67 f.; Würzburg 265: ADDENDA 43 (151.22). Cfr. NOEL 2000, 83 ff. Analogous scenes are attested on fragments found at Kavala (ADDENDA 43 /151, Para 65/) and at Samos (KREUZER 1998, 68 f. and 119 no. 30).

²⁰⁴ Dionysos 2001, 128 and 142.

What is the context of the two scenes? The *komos* is certainly located at the level of human ritual, but defining the location of the scene of the pressing is more difficult. We have to ask what the meaning of a female presence – present even outside of the work of the Amasis Painter – in the male work environment could be?²⁰⁵ We will return to this question later on.

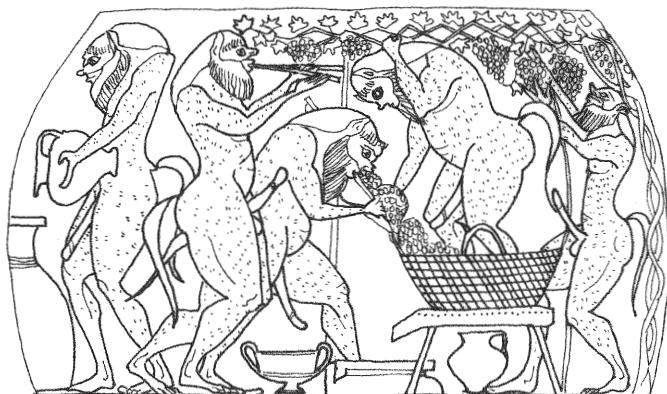


Fig. 34

The other wine-making scene by the Amasis Painter is found on an *amphora* of a special type, dating to about a decade later than the first example.²⁰⁶ Five satyrs are the only participants in the grape harvest here (Fig. 34). Unlike the Basle version, several phases of work are alluded to: at the far right, the harvesting of grapes; at the center, the unloading and pressing of grapes; at the left, the necessary amount of water is added for the proper consumption of wine. An *aulós* player also participates in the central group. The three receptacles – the ritual *kantharos*, a typical attribute of Dionysos; the *pithos*; and the pitcher – gathered at the lower edge of the scene allude to the future use of the wine. The satyrs are all adults, but of different ages. All hairy, but the two at the center are characterized as older by their heavier bodies. The addition of the vines, whose branches are heavy with bunches of grapes and are supported by two poles, serve to clarify that the labor occurs in the vineyard itself: the

²⁰⁵ SPARKES 1976, 57 f. and figs. 2 f., 6 and 13; Dionysos 2001, 164 figs. 83-85. A problem pointed to by VILLANUEVA PUIG 1988, 39-41 and 53. Cfr. also NOEL 2000.

²⁰⁶ Würzburg 265: ADDENDA 43 (151.22); Dionysos 2001, 129. For the dating, see SPARKES 1976, 50 and ISLER 1994, 110 f. (against von Bothmer).

vineyard of Dionysos, who is himself absent but is evoked by the *kantharos* and represented in the miniature scene above the panel.

On the other side, it is the *kantharos* that Dionysos holds in his right hand while dancing that is found at the center of the image. In his other hand, the god holds a bunch of ivy branches, perhaps to recall the darker aspects of his realm. A satyr approaches him from the left and pours wine for the God into the *kantharos* from a wineskin.²⁰⁷ The last figure on the left is a satyr playing an instrument. A closely embraced couple enters the scene from the right, evidently a homosexual couple, composed of two satyrs, one hairy, the other without hair. This is the formula used for a heterosexual couple on the Basle *amphora* and also for two homosexual young women on the aforementioned neck-amphora.²⁰⁸ This is one of the very few black figure *thiasoi* in which Dionysos participates in the same manner as the satyrs.²⁰⁹ But not even this image relegates the event to just a single level: the satyr who pours the wine, in fact, alerts the external viewer that here, too, he should feel himself drawn into the scene and invited to identify himself with the satyr.

The two scenes probably refer to two stages of the same event²¹⁰: tasting the beverage logically follows the making of wine and euphoria, including that of an erotic nature, is a consequence. It seems that this message was already contained, even if less explicitly, in the Basle *amphora* version. Whether or not that is the case, the new fact common to each is the emphasis on the process of making wine. While the *dinos* of Sophilos could have made one think that grape vines and wine were free gifts of Dionysos to humanity, like grain was the gift of Demeter,²¹¹ Lydos had already evoked the various stages that move from the plant to the *symposion* beverage.²¹² The Amasis Painter goes beyond this: not only is there a process from vine to wine – a process that reflects the passage of humanity from nature to culture and is a metaphor for this very passage – but this process asks for physical effort and *techne*, that is, practical knowledge: not that of one person alone, but of a collective.²¹³ All this becomes to be attributed to the satyrs. We know in addition – many

²⁰⁷ For more ample explanation of the significance of the ivy, see ISLER-KERÉNYI 1990a, 67; Dionysos 2001, 133 f., 143 and 176.

²⁰⁸ Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 222: ADDENDA 43 (152.25). The erotic significance of the gesture is discussed in ISLER-KERÉNYI 1990a, 63 f.

²⁰⁹ The other example is a cup, Copenhagen 5179: ADDENDA 17 (64.24); Dionysos 2001, 57 f. and 79 figs. 29 f.

²¹⁰ Cfr. SPARKES 1976, 50.

²¹¹ E. Ba. 272-285. Cfr. MASSENZIO 1999, 16. For a full interpretation, see SCARPI 1989, 57-66.

²¹² Cfr. the commentary on the *krater* in New York, p. 55.

²¹³ On the fabrication of wine in the ancient world: LONGO 1999.

myths tell us this, not only the tragic story of Ikarios – that the process was highly risky, and sometimes even lethal.²¹⁴ The idea expressed here, that the satyrs themselves were the engineers of the transformation from grape to wine and guarantors of the happy passages from nature to culture, is new and will be pursued.²¹⁵

The comparison of the two representations discussed also reveals a significant difference, the addition of the vine. Would not showing the various phases have been enough to illustrate the work of the satyrs? By adding the vine, a topographical element, the Amasis Painter underlines the fact that the transformation of the grape into wine does not occur in the city, but in the country. The countryside is, therefore, attributed with an essential role in the process of achieving civilized life. Having taken into account the chronological grouping of these *amphorae* from between 540 and 530 B.C. – that is the full Peisistratean age – it is possible to relate this narrative of re-evaluating the rural world to a well-defined political program.²¹⁶

The vine, mother of wine

A political-historical reading of the vine motif, however likely, could reveal itself to be reductive. Certainly, this vine of the Amasis Painter is one of the first to enter the repertoire of Athenian vase painters, but it is not unique. Moreover, the pressing is not the only context in which the vine appears. We digress, therefore, to consider certain images of vines in other contemporary and later contexts with the goal of recognizing other possible meanings for the vine motif and shedding some light on these still unclear images, among which are the mule ride on the Tyrrhenian *amphora* already considered.²¹⁷

Without a doubt, the most famous vines in vase painting are those born on the ship of Dionysos, on the eye-cup by Exekias made shortly after 540 B.C.²¹⁸ There is no doubt of the fact that this vine shown alongside dolphins and the *symposion* god on the high sea, evokes Dionysian happiness. An even more significant representation of the vine is found

²¹⁴ For a comparative analysis of the myths on the origins of wine, see MAS-SENZIO 1969. On the myths dealing with the introduction of wine into Attica, see KERÉNYI 1994, 98-108.

²¹⁵ Diodorus too does not mention satyrs: NOEL 2000, 79.

²¹⁶ On the politics of Peisistratos favoring farmers: RAAFLAUB 1996, 1077 ff. Cfr. also VOELKE 2001, 388 (with note 20).

²¹⁷ See p. 57 fig. 29. On vines compared with other trees in vase painting: CHAZALON 1995, 108-111.

²¹⁸ München 2044: ADDENDA 41 (146.21); Dionysos 2001, 178-188, 207 f. and figs. 104-107.

on an exceptional cup, the Kallis Painter *kylix* in Naples, at least as important as that of Exekias, even if less well known, and to be dated to around or just after 540 B.C. The joint reading of the two sides of the vase – the interior is without decoration – allows us to hypothesize that the two images of Dionysos (on one side between three nymphs, on the other facing Semele) allude to an initiatory process that lead to Bacchic happiness.²¹⁹

One of the aspects of the cup that has yet to be examined is the large vine weighed down with bunches of grapes that encircles Dionysos and Semele. The trunk of the vine, i.e. the point of its origin, is seen behind the bust of Semele, while the tendrils behind Dionysos are simply its continuation (*Fig.35a*). Considering the very high artistic quality of the piece, it cannot be accidental that the vine is born and grows only on the side of Semele (*Fig.35b*). As Semele was the mother of Dionysos so is the plant in fact the prerequisite of the fruit because it exists first: two passages in Pindar confirm this. In them, wine, i.e. Dionysos, is called the son of the vine, of *ampelos*: in Greek, like most plants this is in the feminine.²²⁰ As Dionysos is metaphorically the wine contained in his own *kantharos* at the center of the image, so Semele, his mother, is equaled to the vine. Despite her motherhood, however, she will forever remain a nymph because she had died before Dionysos was born. Her anything but matronly appearance confirms this. Having become a mother after death, she retained the appearance of a nymph even after Dionysos had made her immortal.²²¹ The analogy is evident: while the fruit, the bunch of grapes, will become trampled and destroyed in order to become wine, the vine, even when pruned, continues to live and becomes with this the symbol and guarantee of continuity beyond death.

This interpretation of the vine confirms the reading of this exceptional cup in Bacchic code. From this perspective, what could the meaning be of the satyrs in the vine? In this case, there are three minuscule figures of satyrs: two of them, located between the handle attachments are dancing towards the fulcrum of the picture (consisting of the facing busts of Dionysos and Semele). The third satyr, with equine ears but no tail (perhaps thus alluding to the process of transformation?), has climbed on the vine located beneath Semele.

Above all there is one striking novelty: the small stature of the satyrs. It is unequivocally a way to celebrate the grandeur of Dionysos²²²

²¹⁹ Naples Stg. 172: ADDENDA 55 (203.1); Dionysos 2001, 175-178 and 206 figs. 102-103.

²²⁰ See p. 38 note 110.

²²¹ A happy change of status in death may constitute, as already proposed, the hidden message of the Bacchic mysteries: Dionysos 2001, 177 f. with the note 64.

²²² KUNZE-GÖTTE 1992, 153 f.

and at the same time to underline the young boyish or even monkey-like nature of the satyrs. Whether monkeys or children, they impersonate the immature: that which precedes the finished form.²²³ It also serves to remind one that without the work and knowledge of the satyrs, grapes could not be transformed into wine. Without their work, the *kantharos* presented with ceremonial emphasis by Dionysos, symbol of the Bacchic condition just achieved by Semele, would have remained empty.²²⁴

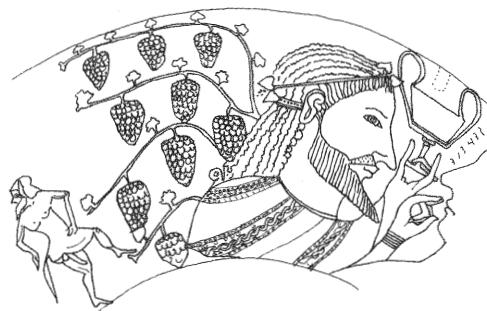


Fig. 35a



Fig. 35b

²²³ With regard to a miniature satyr on a red figured vase, cfr. LISSARRAGUE 1998, 186: „Le petit satyre est barbu mais n'a pas encore sa queue de cheval; il est incomplet en quelque sorte et peut être considéré comme un enfant, ainsi que le suggère sa taille.“

²²⁴ On the *kantharos* as a symbol of the hero-condition: ISLER-KERÉNYI 1990b, 45.

The still-young satyrs already live in this vine before the grape harvest. In fact, as we will see shortly, they live there for their own enjoyment and without any utilitarian aim. Their link is as close to the vine as it is to wine: they are tied to the continuing life of the plant, the death of the fruit, and the birth of the wine. It follows that the presence of the satyrs and their work in the vineyard of Dionysos, in addition to having a political message, could have expressed a religious reflection coinciding with the experience of mystery-initiation: happiness given by the notion of continuity, experience of death, of *metamorphosis* in death, and of rebirth after death.²²⁵

With this, a special role of the satyr in Bacchic ritual is outlined. We must not forget how Lydos and others insisted on the role of the satyrs in the *thiasos*: both the satyrs and the nymphs saw Dionysos, but only the satyrs made him visible to the outside viewer. That viewer, however, in order truly to see Dionysos had to become a satyr, that is, go through a *metamorphosis* – a *metamorphosis* that enabled him to see.²²⁶

That watching and seeing do not always coincide, and that truth must be distinguished from the apparent truth, was an argument of great importance from 540 to 530 B.C. in Athens. The other innovations from these years indicate this as well: the institution of tragedy – where blindness is a main theme –, and the invention of the eye-cup.²²⁷ As has already been observed with regard to the *thiasos*,²²⁸ a problem emerges – to be treated shortly – regarding the relationship between the satyrs who, in the *thiasos* of the vases, direct the human users of the images towards Dionysos and the satyrs in Bacchic contexts.

²²⁵ SEAFORD 1981, 261: „The idea that the initiate has to die to be reborn is widespread in initiation ritual in general...“; Burkert 1987, 23 f.: „It is tempting to assume that the central idea of all initiations should be death and resurrection, so that extinction and salvation are anticipated in the ritual, and real death becomes a repetition of secondary importance; but the pagan evidence for resurrection symbolism is unconvincing at best. In a more general way initiation is a change of status...“

²²⁶ Cfr. VERNANT 1990, 226 (referring to Euripides Bacchae); MASSENZIO 1995, 34: „Dioniso, quando fa le sue apparizioni, vuole essere visto e riconosciuto; ma, per poter vedere il dio occorre possedere un modo di vedere qualitativamente diverso, una „seconda vista“ capace di penetrare l'essenza delle cose al di là delle apparenze che la nascondono.“

²²⁷ Dionysos 2001, 181 and 201.

²²⁸ Cfr. p. 45.

The vine between death and *apotheosis*

We have asked ourselves what meaning the feminine presence had in the context of masculine work in the first scene of grape pressing by the Amasis Painter. This feminine presence – as the cup from Naples just discussed leads us to believe – appears motivated more by the plant than by its fruit. With regard to this hypothesis, it will be useful to consider the well-known calyx-krater by Exekias found in Athens and also datable to the years just after 540 B.C.²²⁹ There are two main scenes. On one side, the solemn entrance of Herakles into Olympus is depicted. He is accompanied by Athena and greeted by various gods, Hermes leading the group and Dionysos probably at the rear.²³⁰ A duel between two heroes over the body of a fallen comrade at Troy is shown on the other side: one death has occurred and another is still to come.

Both of the intermediate spaces above the handles are filled with luxurious vines. Between the leaves and clusters of grapes sits a nymph who observes the divine procession accompanying Herakles. The secondary zone, which serves as a platform, has fighting animals on each side: two lions maul a bull that has been forced to the ground – an echo and metaphor of the hoplite duel over the fallen warrior. In the space between the handles and beneath the nymphs, a satyr, facing left, but moving right is depicted on each side of the vase: he is meant to evoke the *thiasos*, which normally surrounds him. These satyrs stand, like the nymphs, in a marginal zone and, like the fighting animals, are no strangers to a world dominated by violence.

The cumulative effect of the decoration is anything but devoid of symbolic meaning: the glorious death of military heroes is set against the apotheosis in Olympus of a heroic figure. Between the two scenes is the vine – symbol of happiness and continuity – laden with grapes destined to die. To a certain extent, the vine is equivalent to Olympus. In fact, the nymphs do not watch for death to occur on the battlefield, but for the happy *metamorphosis* of a hero into a god.

Locating nymphs among the vines is a new motif in vase painting. The nymphs on the François vase were associated with water. This is a completely logical link if one considers that the correct consumption of wine in a *symposium* required the addition of water.²³¹ In this sense, the satyrs – as we have seen – who are responsible for wine, cannot do without the nymphs. Moreover, the presence of the nymphs is not surprising, since mythology located those beings not only near springs but also in

²²⁹ Athens, Agorà, AP 1044: ADDENDA 40 (145.19).

²³⁰ BRONEER 1937, 472.

²³¹ For a fuller discussion: LONGO 1991.

trees.²³² Here, however, the nymphs do not run or dance together with the satyrs. They instead sit – one on a rock, the other on a seat – like Dionysos, patron of the vines. For Exekias, these nymphs are the mistresses of the vine, while the satyrs stand – literally and metaphorically – below them, at the level of wild animals: a hierarchy that reflects the one between Semele and the little satyrs in the vines on the cup from Naples. However, to say that Semele is a nymph of the vines would be improper and reductive. In her case, the vine is a metaphor for her maternal fate, unique and anomalous. The nymphs that reside in each plant and who are sought by the satyrs are anything but unique: they instead embody the erotic component of Dionysian happiness evoked through the vine.

The vineyard of Dionysos

Images of the vine are found, as we have observed, in more than one context: in wine making,²³³ the mule ride, and initiatory experience. Depending on the context, satyrs have a different appearance and attitude. During the same period, the vineyard of Dionysos can also be the main theme, as attested by vases of the workshop of Exekias.²³⁴ The scene is dominated by the imposing seated figure of the Master of the Vines, who, a rare event, raises his *kantharos* to his mouth. In his left hand, he holds a branch of ivy, which, as we have noted, is also a Dionysian plant that here rather evokes his dark wintry side. The vine grows before him, with branches laden by bunches of grapes and spread throughout the scene in an aesthetic way (*Fig. 36*).

A dozen little satyrs circulate between the branches. The baskets suggest that their task should be to pick the grapes, but instead the satyrs seem more interested in performing various acrobatic feats of a purely playful nature.²³⁵ Their behavior again recalls that of monkeys and immature children. However, the satyrs have beards, which indicates two things: that their miniature stature is intended as a way to emphasize the regal dignity of the divine figure,²³⁶ and that their nature remains impish

²³² LIMC VIII.1 (1997), 891 (H. Tisserant – G. Siebert); LARSON 2001, 8 f., 10 f. and 73.

²³³ For a list (although not complete) of black-figured vases with scenes of wine-making: HEDREEN 1992, 185 f. „Diminutive silens“ among the branches of the grape vine are discussed there on p. 85.

²³⁴ Boston 63.952: ADDENDA 41 (147); CARPENTER 1986, plate 21; HE-DREEN 1992, 185 no. 2. Very similar, but not quite as precise is the version by the Priam Painter (Villa Giulia 2609): Cité des images 130 fig. 183.

²³⁵ Cfr. HEDREEN 1992, 85: „diminutive silens scrambling in the vine...in no scene are they working very efficiently.“

²³⁶ KUNZE-GÖTTE 1992, 153 f. See also the *amphora* Würzburg 208: Kunst der Schale 325, 56.1.

and „good for nothing“²³⁷ even when they have become adult: the labor imposed on them (i.e., the grape harvest and pressing) is thus against their constitution.

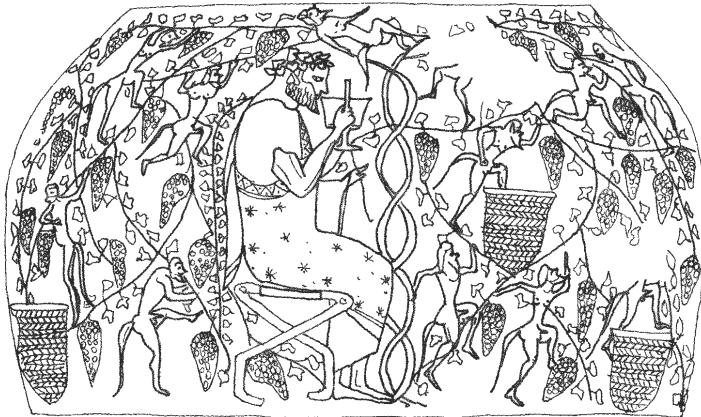


Fig. 36

The vineyard of Dionysos with the little satyrs can also serve as the background for the reclining couple of banqueters, Dionysos with his companion Ariadne, a prototype of the symposial partner,²³⁸ and there is no doubt about the fact that in all the images considered thus far, beginning with the two cups from around 540 B.C., the vineyard is a sign of happiness (Fig. 37). With the ivy, however, the darker side is always present, recalling death within Dionysian happiness.

Now, let us return to representations of wine making. One of the images of a happy Dionysos is actually combined with a scene of grape pressing. It is on an neck-*amphora*, that can be dated to 520 B.C., i.e. about twenty years after the first representation of the vine.²³⁹ The scene of grape pressing on one side is connected without interruption to that of Dionysos, reclined on his *kline*, with a seated female figure to his side, probably Ariadne, here in the role of legitimate wife.²⁴⁰ The conjugal idyll is located under a large tree-like vine that grows directly next to the

²³⁷ So, Hesiod defines them: Hes. Fr. 123 (Merkelbach-West).

²³⁸ München 1562: Dionysos 2001, 140 and 169 fig. 95, cfr. especially the miniature satyrs: Kunst der Schale 411, 74.1.

²³⁹ Boston 01.8052: ADDENDA 62 (242.35); Dionysos 2001, 138 and 164 figs. 83-85; NOEL 2000, 91.

²⁴⁰ On the multi-faceted nature of Ariadne as a mythical prototype: Dionysos 2001, 122 f.

kline, and on which a small satyr is climbing. Other satyrs are busy at work with grape pressing: two of them bear baskets laden with grapes, another stomps on the bunches of grapes in the wine-press. The music



Fig. 37

that gives their work a rhythm is provided by a satyr who plays the *aulós* and stands directly behind Ariadne. He is accompanied by a nymph playing the castanets. Two couples, each consisting of a satyr and a nymph, are added to these figures: one of the satyrs is groping a woman and kissing her, the other ithyphallic satyr is about to grasp a dancing nymph. In the vineyard of Dionysos satyrs meet the nymphs of the vines and together they create an erotic *thiasos*.

This *amphora* also presents an aspect that is common in many representations of the *thiasos*: three of the satyrs, those gathered in the marginal zones of the handles of the vase, turn their faces towards the outside, thus interacting with the viewer of the image (Fig. 38a and 38b).²⁴¹ Despite the fact that representations of the pressing probably refer to the mythological event in which Dionysos taught the satyrs how to transform grapes into wine, they also turn towards the present in this way.

On a cup from the end of the 6th century, a mule rider is included in the scenes of grape harvest and pressing. However, this time, he seems

²⁴¹ MommSEN 1975, plate 114; Dionysos 2001, 164 fig. 85.

to be Dionysos, owner of the vineyard.²⁴² The decoration is dominated by a *gorgoneion*, a sign of death, located at the center of the vase.²⁴³ In this case, as in the Tyrrhenian *amphora*, considered with regard to the mule riders, the destination of the cavalcade is the vineyard of Dionysos. The vineyard, like Olympus in the story of Hephaistos, and as on the calyx *krater* of Exekias, is a place where harmony is re-established after a dangerous crisis, and, in this sense, also of Dionysian happiness.



Fig. 38a



Fig. 38b

The work in Dionysos' vineyard was, therefore, also a means of becoming a satyr. And becoming a satyr with Dionysos meant to attain happiness. This explains the strange image on another Tyrrhenian *amphora*, with grotesque dancers busy with the most uninhibited erotic activities. Having arrived in the vicinity of the large vine, the dancers are transformed into satyrs.²⁴⁴ This representation echoes that on one of the phallic cups dated around 520 B.C.:²⁴⁵ on the external sides, between the large eyes, are erotic scenes involving the *symposion* members that could not be more explicit. The large eyes recall, as we have hypothesized elsewhere,²⁴⁶ that in order to pursue happiness, it is necessary to see truth behind appearance: the wine of the *symposion*, tragic experience, and Bacchic initiation could all lead towards this end.

Summing up what can be concluded from the images just considered, it is necessary to note that the vine enters the repertoire of vase

²⁴² The mules of Dionysos are a recurring motif in red figured vase painting: PADGETT 2000, 53 f.; See p. 88 f.

²⁴³ Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 320: ADDENDA 102 (389); HEDREEN 1992, plate 28; NOEL 2000, 92 ff.

²⁴⁴ Copenhagen, National Museum Chr.VIII (57): Para 38 (102.97); Dionysos 2001, 139 and 166 f. figs. 88-91; KLUIVER 1995, 59 no. 13 dated 565-560 B.C. (p. 82).

²⁴⁵ Berlin F 2052: Dionysos 2001, 192, 214 f., and figs. 118-120.

²⁴⁶ Dionysos 2001, 179 ff.

painting in stages. In the first phase, perhaps even before the middle of the century, it is shown in connection with the Dionysian dance of the *komos* and with the mule ride on Tyrrhenian *amphorae*.²⁴⁷ In the next phase, in the years around 540 B.C., the vine becomes an important subject for its political and religious value: with the vine, the little satyr recalls the mythical moment preceding the first making of wine. We have seen that in this very period Dionysian iconography showed other significant innovations that can probably be tied with changes in cult practices during the Peisistratid regime.²⁴⁸ It is then very probable that a new emphasis on the vine, a symbol of continuity beyond death, recurred in this period of renewed religious reflection. The motif enjoyed particular attention until around 500 B.C., after which it tended to become banal. This is demonstrated by many images of the *thiasos* that have quite been invaded by vine-stems in late black figured vase painting.²⁴⁹

The images and the rites

This is the moment to consider the possible relationship between the images of satyrs and Dionysian rites about which we have information. Above all, it must be emphasized that the tradition of rites and celebrations is composed of very diverse sources, both in terms of type and chronology, but nevertheless retains many lacunae.²⁵⁰ It is not arbitrary, thus, to hypothesize the existence of rites about which we lack explicit mention on the basis of iconography – as we have seen in the case of the mule ride. Even if the images reflect something of the celebrations, there still remain two essential facts. The first is that the language of vase painters, as we have already made note several times during this study, evades literal and realistic description of something occurring in tangible reality. The second is that the vase-paintings created in Athens should have meaning even for those who in the end bought and used the vases outside of Attica (e.g. in Etruscan cities and cemeteries).

If images on vases are not literally descriptive, it is useless to want to use them to reconstruct the procedures of specific rites, as, for example, the processions or sacrifices of any given festival. This holds true not

²⁴⁷ To the two already discussed (Louvre E 860 and Copenhagen 57) one more should be added from Cerveteri and attributed to the Timiades Painter (like the first), but more recent: KLUIVER 1995, 68 no. 62; Dionysos 2001, 139 note 220.

²⁴⁸ Dionysos 2001, 227.

²⁴⁹ Instead, red figured vase painting lacks vines in the scenes of grape pressing: SPARKES 1976; NOEL 2000, 82 ff. with one exception: *Kylix ADDENDA* 172 (104.5). Also absent after 500 B.C. are the large eyes on cups: Dionysos 2001, 182.

²⁵⁰ PARKE 1977, 15 f.

only for the 5th century examples, as the so-called *Lenaea*-vases²⁵¹ and the little pitchers usually attributed to the *Anthesteria*,²⁵² but also, *a fortiori* for the archaic ones. This means that even if a rite of integration into the *polis* of an inferior category existed, it remains that none of the representations of the mule ride was intended to reproduce it as it occurred in Athens. For vase painters as for users of vases both within Athens and outside, it was important only to recall a ritual that guaranteed the cohesion of citizenship through its characteristic component, the mule ride, and through its patron divinity, Dionysos.

It is equally unlikely that scenes of the grape harvest and pressing make reference to the autumnal feast of the *Oschophoria*, the name of which recalls the transport of grapes.²⁵³ In this feast, everything took place on the road between the town and the harbor of Athens, not in the countryside.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, considering the symbolic and religious value attributed to wine by the societies for which the images were destined, it is unlikely that the making of wine would be considered a purely utilitarian and agricultural activity.²⁵⁵ It is much more likely that the workers in the vineyard acted in an aura of solemn ritual and that they came to identify themselves with the mythic figures to whom Dionysos had taught the art of making wine. As the *symposion* gave origin to the *komos* and the *komos* of grotesque dancers could transform itself into a *thiasos* of satyrs – and in that way give access, at least emotionally, to Dionysos – so too the making of wine offered the occasion to feel oneself satyr through the re-acting of the first grape harvest and the first grape pressing. This could happen every autumn and where ever vines grew: in Attica as in Italy.

A new role, other than that of giving mortals access to Dionysos, becomes attributed to the satyrs through this. Despite being by their nature good for nothing, violent, and hedonistic, they were subjected by Dionysos to a hard and time-consuming task. Succeeding in the end in changing grapes into wine, they contributed effectively to world civilization: the very contradictions of their character and of their behavior make

²⁵¹ FRONTISI-DUCROUX 1997, 131: „...l'image du dieu-masque que montrent les vases des Lénennes ne renvoie pas à une effigie unique, localisée dans un sanctuaire particulier...“; NOEL 2000, 93.

²⁵² HAMILTON 1992, 121.

²⁵³ HEDREEN 1992, 83 ff.

²⁵⁴ On this festival: Der Neue Pauly 9 (2000) 82 s. v. *Oschophoria* (K. Waldner).

²⁵⁵ Cfr. SCARPI 1989, 58: „Si può così riconoscere una stretta relazione tra attività, che genericamente potremmo chiamare agricole, e pratica religiosa. L'attenzione richiesta all'agricoltore non è diversa dall'attenzione e precisione indispensabili nelle operazioni rituali.“ On the religious meaning of wine making: DARAKI 1985, 54 f.

them the ideal vehicle for the beneficent work of Dionysos. The most convincing example is given in Kleitias's version of the story of Hephaistos. Without the wine produced by the satyrs, present in the wineskin that one of them is carrying, peace and order would not have been re-established in the Olympic family.

The contradiction between wild nature and civilizing action holds true also from the human perspective. In fact, the wine made by the satyrs causes inebriation when consumed in the proper fashion – i.e. it uninhibits and euphorizes, but does not poison – and thus allows the individual citizen the opportunity to escape without subverting the system of the *polis*. In short, neither Dionysos nor the *polis* could do without the satyrs.²⁵⁶

If neither Dionysos nor the *polis* could do without the satyrs – or at least without the satyric element in the citizen – this means that in a proper *polis* satyrs were everywhere, they lived and interacted with the citizens. It is thus understandable that they are ubiquitous on ceramics. The role of indispensable intermediaries attributed to the satyrs, the makers of wine in the myth of the return of Hephaistos, predestined them to a further analogous role at the human and individual level. The iconography of the *thiasos* from Lydos, i.e. from c. 560 B.C., clearly registers, in fact, a reflection of this. The problem then becomes understanding whether or not the *thiasoi* on vases could refer to initiatory *thiasoi* like those of which there is evidence in more recent epochs.²⁵⁷

Accurate interpretation of the cup of Naples has already lead to the conclusion that Bacchic initiations could have been instituted in Athens by the Peisistratid era, in response to the necessity to better integrate the female population into the *polis* system.²⁵⁸ The ubiquity of the satyrs would explain their presence on the cup. But their small stature and marginal placement, in obvious contrast to the prevailing image of satyrs in vase painting, seems to indicate a significant difference between the feminine and masculine point of view within the context of mysteries.

The iconographic situation, about which we now have more precise understanding, in fact, leads to the thought that initiatory experience, offered to women around 540 B.C., came from precedents in the male sphere. From around 560 B.C., if true Bacchic initiations did perhaps not yet exist for men, they at least had ritualized occasions to approach Dio-

²⁵⁶ To confirm this, one needs only recall the relief on one of the city-gates of Thasos depicting a monumental satyr – dignified in pose and with a *kantharos* in his hand – who prepares to enter the city: Dionysos 2001, 231 f. and 237 fig. 132.

²⁵⁷ On the discussion whether the Bacchic mystery rituals existed prior to the Hellenistic period, see SEAFORD 1981, 252 f.; VOELKE 2001, 384 and note 11; JACCOTTET 2003, 125 ff.

²⁵⁸ Dionysos 2001, 226 f.

nysos: the *symposion*, with the transformation into a satyr through dance or sexual activities, and the procession that accompanied the ritual cavalcade. However, it is the subject of grape harvesting and pressing, also introduced just after 540 B.C., in which the task of dismembering Dionysos in order to make him born again as wine falls to the satyrs, that definitely make evident the religious dimension, even the Bacchic dimension, of the figure of the satyr. We will return to this question in the concluding chapter.

SATYRS ON VASES AND ON THE STAGE

Satyrs making wine in the vineyard of Dionysos are one of the important innovations of Dionysian iconography of the years immediately following 540 B.C., that is, the Age of Peisistratos. Homage was paid to the farmland surrounding the city and to the contribution that it had made to the process of civilizing humanity through this motif. The motif of processing grapes in vase painting can be read, in fact, as an echo of the politics of Athens between Solon and Kleisthenes. Regardless of the diversity of the regimes, the political leaders of this age were inclined to favor cohesion between the town, in the process of growth and urbanization, and the surrounding rural zone upon which the city relied economically.

Apart from political connotations of the motif of the vine, introduced at the latest during this period²⁵⁹ and used not only in combination with that of the grape harvest and pressing, there were probably religious factors that influenced the iconographic choices of Athenian vase painters. This is not surprising if we remember the strict inter-relationship between religion and politics that characterized all ancient civilizations: in fact, all those preceding the societies of the modern era. As regards the satyrs, it was actually through their role as those responsible for wine and its beneficent effects, that they acquired their most noble functions. These functions included in mythical times transforming the grape into wine – in a happy rather than a tragic way – and in the present introducing the users of the vases to the realm of Dionysos, where joy given by *eros* bore with it the idea of death as a presupposition to a new beginning.

Within the vines little satyrs often appear, i.e. not completely adult satyrs or satyrs similar to monkeys that evoke – as we have hypothesized – a primordial moment of cosmic becoming in which the vine bore its bunches of grapes but the art of wine making was still unknown.

Another important innovation from about the same time was the introduction of tragedy into the festive cycle by which the *polis* of Athens honored Dionysos. Shortly after, in the final years of the 5th century, Pratinas, „inventor“ of Satyr Plays was active in Athens.²⁶⁰ Apart from the question of whether or not there ever existed and, if so, for how long, a phase in which this spectacle was cultivated independently of tragedy

²⁵⁹ For the problem of dating Tyrrhenian *amphoras*: See p. 57 note 171. Following KLUIVER 1995, 79 ff. vine first appears shortly after 560 B.C., following Carpenter around 540.

²⁶⁰ On the dating: ROSSI 1972, 267 f. and 274 f.; SEAFORD 1984, 13; Satyrspiel 8 f.; ROSSI 1991, 20 ff.; VOELKE 2001, 18.

as if it was not the last but the first representation of the tetralogy,²⁶¹ it was in full blossom around 500 B.C.

Beyond doubt, around 500 B.C. satyrs were a favorite theme in vase painting as well. Satyrs were, therefore, familiar figures to the theater-going public, encountered regularly in the *symposia* which they entered with the vases bearing the images, although the exact moment of their first appearance on the scene of Athens is not known. The next problem that must now be considered is not that of identifying the vase paintings that could have been inspired by Satyr Plays: this task has been done recently.²⁶² Our goal is to delve into the meaning that such a contradictory and ubiquitous figure could have for the public of Athens. This public was not exactly the same: in *symposia* they gathered in small, substantially male, groups, in a more intimate atmosphere than in the theater where there was the entire body of citizens, probably including women.²⁶³ We will thus attempt to define the common and differing traits between the satyrs in the scene and those on the vases. But in order to have a complete picture of satyr iconography, we must first consider, at least globally, the satyrs of the new red figured style of vase painting that was introduced, as we know well, around 525 B.C, thus, at a moment clearly preceding the work of Pratinas.²⁶⁴

Satyrs in red figured vase painting

The *thiasos* is the most common context in which we find satyrs during the first generations of red figured vase painting. The iconographic formula remains substantially unchanged even when Dionysos is not depicted: that is to say he is implicitly always present. The relationship of the satyrs and the nymphs does not change: it goes from the common dance to the generally failed attempts at sexual appropriation. This is the only subject that vaguely recalls the rendering of satyrs as violent aggressors against women in the first decades of the 6th century.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ ROSSI 1972, 267 f.

²⁶² Satyrspiel 41-73 and plates 1-30. The criteria are not very convincing: according to the criteria, a motif should appear during several decades to deduce a theatrical inspiration for it (p. 48 and notes 33-34). A more plausible index of theatrical representation is the use of an atypical motif within a short time span.

²⁶³ The evidence *pro* and *contra* are gathered and discussed in: PODLECKI 1990, 27-43.

²⁶⁴ Chapters 1-34 of ARV are taken here into consideration in their entirety (i.e. vase painting from the first half of the 5th century); LIMC VIII Suppl. s.v. Silenoi (E. Simon). For a more profound analysis on the various iconographic motifs, see the contributions by LISSARRAGUE, of which we cite only the following: 1987b, 1988, 1990, 1995, 1998.

²⁶⁵ See p. 11 ff.

Of comparable frequency are single satyrs that decorate the medallions of cups and also some plates or covers for *pyxides*, of which some are still in the black-figured technique (Fig. 39).²⁶⁶ We find a large number in the work of Oltos and Epiktetos, but also in the workshops of Nikosthenes and Pamphaios and by the best cup masters from the first decades of the 5th century as well (namely, Onesimos, the followers of the Brygos Painter, Duris and Makron), in whose work they are at times shown together with a nymph or with Dionysos. The motif of the satyr, much more frequent than that of Dionysos alone, that of the nymph alone, or of the komast, inspired vase painters to a great variety of gestures, compositions, and attributes. Among the latter those linked to wine are dominant, including *amphoras* and wineskins. This is not surprising if one thinks that the participant at the *symposion* was the first to enjoy the image and it confirms the link between satyrs and wine.



Fig. 39

Even if the turning of the head toward the viewer of the vase was no longer in fashion, the location of the motif in cup medallions suggests that whoever drank the wine was called to identify himself with the satyrs. This fact also occurs with the satyrs in the *thiasos* and in other contexts where they continue, even if with less frequency, to communicate with the users of the vase.²⁶⁷ Identification with citizens comes to be

²⁶⁶ ADDENDA 151 (9.2: Psiax); ARV 56.26 and 67.2 (Oltos); 67.7 and ADDENDA 166 (67.8: near Oltos).

²⁶⁷ ADDENDA 150 (6.1 and 7.2: Psiax), 151 (11.2: minor vase painter), 155 (23.2: Phintias: here in combination with the erotic motif of a hug at the shoulders); ARV 68.10 (near Oltos), 84.18ter (Skythes); ADDENDA 176 (126.23:

suggested as well when the satyrs present themselves with the lyre instead of the *aulós*,²⁶⁸ like athletes and warriors,²⁶⁹ or like participants in a *symposion*,²⁷⁰ or with the physical form of grotesque dancers.²⁷¹ After 480 B.C., satyrs wearing a *himation* joined this category.²⁷²

Finally, not even the dancing satyrs who make the gesture of the *skopeuma*, to whom Dionysos appears in the *thiasos*, or those who greet Dionysos have disappeared.²⁷³ With regard to this, two facts must be considered. First, the stationary figure of the god in the midst of dancing satyrs and nymphs is by now much less common than the god in motion: this gives the impression that the divinity had drawn closer to his worshippers. Another fact should be underlined: the female figures of the *thiasos* should not be confused with the maenads in the negative sense of the term, that is, with women who have become insane in the images of the atrocious death of Pentheus, Orpheus, or Lykurgos. The correct categorization would be instead, as for the figures of the 6th century, that of nymphs or, when the figure was human, of bacchants (that is, of possessed women).²⁷⁴

Clearly minor with respect to these subjects that could all be connected directly to the iconographic tradition of black figured vases are those scenes that could have occurred in Satyr Plays, among which are the Gigantomachy of Dionysos and the return of Hephaistos (which at this point intends unequivocally the mythical cavalcade). But it is important to stress that both subjects are referred to in art long before the first Satyr Plays:²⁷⁵ this means that the performance on stage, if anything,

Nikosthenes), 187 (185.31: Kleophrades Painter: return of Hephaistos), 208 (283.2: Painter of Louvre G 238, with idol of Dionysos); ARV 296.2 (Troilos Painter), 525.44 (Orchard Painter); ADDENDA 263 (584.21: Earlier Mannerist).

²⁶⁸ ADDENDA 186 (183.7: Kleophrades Painter), 190 (196.1 and 197.9: Berlin Painter).

²⁶⁹ ADDENDA 166 (70.3: Epiktetos), 187 (183.11: Kleophrades Painter); ARV 213.239 (Berlin Painter), 276.80 (Harrow Painter).

²⁷⁰ ADDENDA 205 (266.84: Syriskos Painter).

²⁷¹ ADDENDA 192 (201.70: Berlin Painter).

²⁷² ARV 262.37 (Syriskos Painter); ADDENDA 209 (285.2), ARV 286.21, 1642.12bis (Geras Painter), 527.80 (Orchard Painter), 531.33 (Alkimachos Painter). Cfr. BÉRARD / BRON 1986, 24 f.; BRON 1987. These motifs are discussed also in Satyrspiel 65 ff. under the heading „Satyrn in menschlichen Rollen: Zur ‚Verbürgerlichung‘ der Satyrn“.

²⁷³ E.g., ADDENDA 202 (248.2: Diogenes Painter), 253 (516.2: Cleveland Painter), 257 (551.14: Pan Painter).

²⁷⁴ On this problem, see HEDREEN 1994, 47 ff., especially 53: „...the female companions of the silens are not maenads but nymphs“; ISLER-KERÉNYI 2000, 554 note 5. Cfr. also, Satyrspiel 31: „...mehr als eine Nymph (oder Bakchant) steht ihnen nicht zu“; LARSON 2001, 95 and VOELKE 2001, 218 ff.

²⁷⁵ CARPENTER 1986, 13 ff. and 55 f.

refers to the images, not vice versa.²⁷⁶ Related to the satyrs of Satyr Plays are truly „good for nothing“ satyrs who do things that they could have also done in the theater, frequently spirited inventions of individual vase painters.²⁷⁷ Prohibited actions attributed to satyrs in red figured vase painting, even ones that were clearly blasphemous and thus difficult to explain, are the violation of tombs and herms.²⁷⁸

The images in which satyrs are presented like servants – obviously of Dionysos²⁷⁹ – or at least busy with practical activities (taking bunches of grapes from a basket, preparing a sacrifice, drawing water from a well, cooking, going to a fountain, transporting the throne of Dionysos (*Fig. 40*), or preparing the *kline* for him) could in one sense be inspired by Satyr Plays.²⁸⁰ Images of satyrs making wine are added to the tradition begun around 540 B.C. in black figured vase painting (*Fig. 41*),²⁸¹ while the little satyrs in the vines seem to have disappeared and with them the reference to the primordial moment preceding the invention of wine.

²⁷⁶ Gigantomachies and images of the return of Hephaistos pertain to the category „Sicher mit dem Satyrspiel zu verbindende Vasenbilder“ only in specific cases that should be considered independently (Satyrspiel 58 ff.). On the relationship between theatrical representations and those in vase painting, see LISSARRAGUE 1990 and 1995, 181: „Plutôt que réduire les représentations figurées à n'être que la reproduction de pièces perdues, on proposera donc de les considérer comme un élément essentiel de ce mouvement créateur qui donne aux satyres quantité de rôles nouveaux. Les images, au théâtre et sur les vases, se répondent et se nourrissent mutuellement, proposant au spectateur, dans chacun de ces domaines parallèles, autant de variations mythiques que de vases ou de pièces.“

²⁷⁷ ARV 232.1 (Eucharides Painter: satyr with a musician-Hermes and a dancing goat), 234.6 (Goettingen Painter: satyr with attributes of a bacchant); ADDENDA 207 (273.22: Harrow Painter: capture of Silenus), 208 (279.7: Angel Painter: a satyr who plays with a miniature satyr), 233 (413.24: Dokimasia Painter: satyrs who assist with the deeds of Herakles and Theseus); ARV 525.44 (Orchard Painter: a satyr who molests a person who is relieving himself), ARV 568.36 (Dionysos in theatrical dress among satyrs).

²⁷⁸ ADDENDA 201 (240.44: Myson), 208 (281.34: Angel Painter), 209 (285.2: Geras Painter), 254 (531.29: Alkimachos Painter). On this theme, see Satyrspiel 62 f.; VOELKE 2001, 327 and note 70.

²⁷⁹ At least in one other case also servants of Hephaistos: Satyrspiel 63 note 106; LIMC IV.2 (1988) 387 Hephaistos 15.

²⁸⁰ ARV 242.78 (Myson), 1642 above (Painter of the Winged Angel), 285.7, 286.10, 286.18 (Geras Painter), 551.6 (Pan Painter), 571.75 (Leningrad Painter); CVA Moskow 4, plate 39 (Lewis Painter ?).

²⁸¹ SPARKES 1976: it is worth noting that during the 5th century, with one exception (SPARKES 1976, 53 with note 67, fig. 19), the images are on columnar *kraters* (ARV 281.30: Angel Painter; 516.4: Cleveland Painter; 518.4: Syracuse Painter; 524.25: Orchard Painter; 563.4: Boar Painter; 569.39: Leningrad Painter). On satyrs as servants of Dionysos in Satyr Plays, see SEAFORD 1984, 33 ff.; Satyrspiel 19; VOELKE 2001, 77 ff.



Fig. 40

The images in which satyrs are busy with, or shown together with, one or more mules, generally unbridled, and free, are frequent in the work of Oltos and Epiktetos but continued throughout the first half of the 5th century B.C., and merit some reflection (*Fig. 42*).²⁸² The idea behind these scenes is certainly that, already expressed by Kleitias on his famous *krater*, of physical and behavioral similarity between the mythic figure and the animal.²⁸³ The mule, as red figured vase painters make us understand, remains the animal ridden by Hephaistos, but it also pertains to Dionysos himself.²⁸⁴ And, who would have attended to the mules if not the satyrs, servants of the god? The fact remains, however, that the mule is clearly more important in red figured than in black figured vase painting, even if there are no elements to retain the idea that this iconographic novelty was due to the influence of Satyr Plays on vase painters. Rather, it testifies once more the process of political integration about which we have already spoken with respect to the appearance of the vine motif in

²⁸² E.g.: ADDENDA 166 (64.96, 64.105: Oltos); ARV 76.81: Epiktetos and 416.9: Painter of Louvre G 265; ISLER-KERÉNYI 1987 (Hermonax).

²⁸³ See p.24. Satyrs and mules (or asses): LISSARRAGUE 1987b, 73 f.; and 1988, 338 and 346; PADGETT 2000.

²⁸⁴ ARV 237.11 (Chairippus Painter), 511, middle of the page („compare with the Kaineus P.“), ADDENDA 252 (512.8: Painter of Bologna 228); ARV 543.45 (Florence Painter); ADDENDA 261 (568.35: Leningrad Painter). PADGETT 2000, 53 f.

the iconography. Since Dionysos is the patron of mules, and a divinity we know to be a protector of the city, he comes to be located as well in the countryside. And with this the countryside became more closely integrated into the *polis*.²⁸⁵



Fig. 41

A new phenomenon in Red Figure is the appearance of child satyrs²⁸⁶ of which the „diminutive satyrs“ in the vines, which make their appearance around 540 B.C., could be a prefiguration. The idea that there were non-adult satyrs had already been expressed by the sporadic youthful satyrs of Lydos and the Amasis Painter.²⁸⁷

Returning to the topic, we can affirm that the image of the satyr in red figured vase painting did not substantially change with respect to black figured vase painting: the satyr remains the contradictory figure it has always been – made of more or less undomesticated violence, frequently uncontrolled sexual urges, inclined much more to dance, music, and revelry than to work. In the red figure technique the individual vase painter is more inventive with a larger repertoire than in Black Figure, a phenomenon valid in general for other subjects as well. It cannot be ar-

²⁸⁵ Cf. VOELKE 2001, 388 f.

²⁸⁶ LISSARRAGUE 1998.

²⁸⁷ Psykter-amphora, London 1848.6-19.5 (B 148): ADDENDA 30 (109.29); Amphora Vatican, Collezione Guglielmi 39518: ADDENDA 42 (150.1); Dionysos 2001, 131 note 153.

gued then, that any substantial innovation in the perception of the satyr can be attributed to authors of the new theater genre: the few and sporadic representations that can be traced with security to theatrical inspiration²⁸⁸ do not seem to influence the flow of the iconography, evidently always conditioned by the primarily symposiastic function of vases.



Fig. 42

The satyr remains, then, one of the preferred subjects of vase painters and maintains his double role: as the individual responsible for the bloody, but in the end happy, *metamorphosis* of the grape into wine, which contributed, thus, in a practical way to the transformation of the world from wilderness into civilization. In addition, his role as privileged interlocutor of Dionysos, and thus as intermediary between the divine and human worlds, remains essential. The satyr remains the only figure capable, through identification, of allowing the users of the vase to surpass both the limits given by nature and those imposed by society.

The satyrs of Satyr Plays

After having globally considered the satyrs in red figured vase painting, the moment has arrived to describe in an equally global manner the satyric personality that entered stage. Here our curiosity is hindered by the paucity of sources and of their scarce homogeneity.²⁸⁹ The denomination

²⁸⁸ The few who wear theater-shorts: Satyrspiel 51 ff.

²⁸⁹ ROSSI 1972, 248 and 1991, 12; SEAFORD 1984, 1; Satyrspiel 1 f.

of this type of spectacle derives from the fact that the chorus was formed, not of a group participating in the action and thus different in every drama, but always of satyrs.²⁹⁰ The satyrs, however, unlike the chorus of tragedies, did not limit themselves to commenting on what was occurring on stage, but also participated in the action.²⁹¹ The surviving texts seem to show that the chorus of satyrs was closer to the gods and heroes who served as protagonists in the narrative than to the theater audience: but how can we dismiss the idea that the satyrs of the theater, like those of the *thiasos* in vase painting, would have made gestures of greeting that may have invited the spectators to identify with them?²⁹² Another revealing difference from tragic drama consisted in the fact – beyond, obviously, the fundamental difference in tone, atmosphere, and emotional impact on the audience – that divine characters became involved in the action much more frequently.²⁹³ This means that the satyrs of Satyr Plays, like those in vase painting, moved on different mental levels, even providing a link between normally separate spheres. We will return to this point later.

Much has been discussed about the function of Satyr Plays in recent years.²⁹⁴ The immediate goal is certainly to gain relief after the afflictions of tragedy, those represented and those inflicted on the public. But certainly the most important fact must have been that through the satyrs, Dionysos himself became evoked.

In order to define the personality of the satyr in theater, we will let ourselves be guided by scholars who have expert knowledge of the known fragments and the one Satyr Play remaining in its entirety, the Cyclops of Euripides.²⁹⁵

The satyr usually presents himself as a hybrid figure between human and animal, child and adult, male and female. Divine children and children of heroes, in fact, often become entrusted to the satyrs.²⁹⁶ The hybrid personality accords well with his servile state: the satyrs are the servants of Dionysos, their lord, but they can be reduced to slavery by monstrous and overbearing figures from whom they can be liberated.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁰ Satyrspiel 17 f.: „Zeigt die Tragödie immer neue Chöre in gleichen oder doch verwandten Rollen, so präsentiert also das Satyrspiele die immer gleichen Satyrn in immer neuen Rollen....“

²⁹¹ Satyrspiel 15 and 20.

²⁹² HALL's (1998) argument is in this sense.

²⁹³ Satyrspiel 26.

²⁹⁴ Satyrspiel 34-39.

²⁹⁵ I am referring to SEAFORD 1984; Satyrspiel 17 ff. and especially the exceptionally thorough analysis by VOELKE 2001.

²⁹⁶ SEAFORD 1984, 38; Satyrspiel 31.

²⁹⁷ Cfr. SEAFORD 1984, 35: „...the contrast between the old service of Dionysos and some newly adopted activity seems to have been a feature of the genre.“

Their fluid personality does not impede the satyrs from being impassioned by music, great lovers of wine and practiced dancers: but, unlike the compact and solemn movement of the tragic chorus, the satyric chorus expresses collective emotions in an individual way.²⁹⁸ The most frequent feature that inspires their actions is certainly sexuality.

The settings in which they generally move are the wilderness or a rural place, in contrast to the palaces that serve in large part as the backdrop for tragedies.²⁹⁹ Satyrs always form a group that acts as a collective like the community of the *polis*.³⁰⁰ Like the *polis*-inhabitants they every now and then have diverse roles: they can be fishermen or hunters, messengers or guardians, slaves or farmers, or even field hands or blacksmiths, but they might also, paradoxically,³⁰¹ participate in athletic competitions.

The typical scenes of Satyr Plays include, among others, the liberation from bondage, the manic appeal of sex and wine, their trickery and deceit, and above all situations in which astonished satyrs are presented with grand inventions: musical instruments, miraculous objects, fire, the first maiden, Pandora³⁰², but also with heroic exploits.³⁰³ As genuine Dionysian figures, they marvel at miraculous metamorphoses³⁰⁴ and the emergence from the ground – that is, from Hades – of a divine figure.³⁰⁵ From this, another satyr-like characteristic emerges from the Satyr Plays: stupor. It is the event of seeing things never before seen and, through that stupor, making the unseen visible to the public. That is expressed, among other means, by the figure of the *skopeuma* during the dance.³⁰⁶ Making visible stupefying things means making their effects evident up until the present time and, thereby locating the spectator in the wave of a cultural process.

Satyrs on stage, even if much more diverse, do not contradict those presented on the vases. There are many common traits that stand out: expression in dance, a love for music, the very strong sexual charac-

²⁹⁸ Satyrspiel 21-23.

²⁹⁹ Satyrspiel 12.

³⁰⁰ While Father Silenus, who acts as head of the chorus, remains solitary.

³⁰¹ VOELKE 2001, 272: „les satyres manifestent un décalage flagrant par rapport à la figure de l’athlète.“

³⁰² SEAFORD 1984, 36 f.; Satyrspiel 30; VOELKE 2001, 273-299.

³⁰³ SEAFORD 1984, 39.

³⁰⁴ Such as: Glaukos into a marine divinity, Proteus into various animals, the victims of Kirke and of Medea, or Io into a cow: Satyrspiel 30 and note 144; DI MARCO 2000, 38 f.

³⁰⁵ SEAFORD 1984, 37 f.

³⁰⁶ VOELKE 2001, 299: „ ce geste du satyre danseur mettant la main en visière au-dessus du front pour observer peut résumer le désir de découverte et de compréhension qui l'anime.“

teristic,³⁰⁷ and a substantial bond with Dionysos. Besides, there are destructive features, such as performing to the limit – indeed, often beyond the limits – of the rational and the decent. But even more important is the common role of the intermediaries: the satyrs on the stage who see and make visible stupefying things that are essential for the coming into existence of the present world correspond exactly to the satyrs on vases that show Dionysos and make him visible.

Diversity

But diversity is also relevant. The satyrs in the scene appear in, and perform in, groups. In vase painting we find the group in the *thiasos*, in the mule ride, playing in vines, and at work in the vineyard of Dionysos. The group's unity, however, is often interrupted, whether by the satyr who engages the user of the vase, or by the satyr to whom Dionysos manifests himself.³⁰⁸ In red figured vase painting (but already with antecedents on Black Figure³⁰⁹) there is often a single satyr in the *tondo* of the cup that addresses the individual drinker.

The location for the satyrs in the scenes is often, as we have said, the wilderness. The wilderness was the landscape of the violent satyrs from the beginning of the 6th century, which was gradually replaced by the rural world in which the vines of Dionysos grow and in which wine is made and transported by the satyrs accompanying the mule rider. At this point it is important to highlight an important difference: while the satyrs on the vases give themselves over to the production of wine, this same wine is in the scene a miraculous invention.³¹⁰ This difference has something to do, as we might hypothesize, with the fact that time on stage is different from that of images. However, it is still symptomatic of the satyr-like atmosphere that the wine, whether a result of knowledge and labor or a gift from Dionysos, is acquired without trauma or tragedy, at variance with many mythical accounts that explain the introduction of viniculture through a heroic protagonist.³¹¹

We have already said that the satyrs in Satyr Plays can assist in battles or other heroic deeds: and the heroes present themselves with less solemn, but never ridiculous, attributes than in tragedy.³¹² The time of

³⁰⁷ Cfr. the „gendered“ interpretation of this phenomenon by HALL 1998.

³⁰⁸ For the *apostrophé*: See p. 40 note 114.

³⁰⁹ Kunst der Schale 148, 23.2; KORSHAK 1987, 45 ff.

³¹⁰ VOELKE 2001, 197.

³¹¹ MASSENZIO 1969.

³¹² Satyrspiel 28; VOELKE 2001, 400: „...si les figures héroïques ou divines peuvent voir leur dignité amoindrie et susciter le rire, elles semblent néanmoins à l'abri du ridicule.“

Satyr Plays is, thus, as in tragedy, that of heroes, when the world was not yet the present world, but in one of its preparatory phases, antithetic in many ways to that of the present.³¹³ The satyrs of theater are part of a well-known world, but one that has been overcome, from which the citizen is called, in the interest of the *polis*, to maintain some distance despite being sympathetic to the protagonists. This is an important difference from satyrs on vases: satyrs who assist in heroic events are actually completely lacking in black figured vase painting and remain unusual in Red Figure, with the exception of Herakles³¹⁴ and, naturally, the return of Hephaistos. The combination of satyrs with non-Dionysian mythological events is, thus, the contribution of the poets alone, probably linked, as we will see, to the function of the theatrical genre, as it differs from the function of vases.

Conclusion

To begin, we state that the satyr of vase painting and that of theater, although different, must be fundamentally compatible, since they refer to the same people. We have mentioned their shared traits as well as their differences. Now, we can make the connection between their two manifestations.

As we have said, satyrs in theater were located in the time of heroes: they are the prototype for actual satyrs. The satyrs in much of vase painting are instead depicted among mortals with whom they interact.³¹⁵ only the little satyrs in the vine of the two decades following 540 B.C. may refer to the heroic phase: that of Semele and of Dionysos' birth. The time difference could explain why theatrical satyrs and those on vases relate in different ways to wine. It is indeed not surprising that during the time of heroes, the time of the actual founding of the present world, wine was miraculously given to the satyrs. Whereas in the actual world of mortals it has become necessary to know the techniques of production and to exert physical effort to obtain wine. It is necessary, in addition, to dismember – and thus, „kill“ – the bunches of grapes. Thus, the theme of grape pressing can allude to a religious dimension of the satyr.

Vase painters showing satyrs who seem to communicate with their viewer also point to this dimension: the figure of the Affecter on the *amphora* at Orvieto shows this clearly.³¹⁶ The viewer would realize not only how much of a satyr – for good and bad – there was in him, but he

³¹³ BRELICH 1958, 386 f.

³¹⁴ LISSARRAGUE 1995.

³¹⁵ BÉRARD / BRON 1986, 23 ff.

³¹⁶ Museo Civico 240: ADDENDA 63 (246.73), discussed here on p. 43 (*Fig. 25*).

would also temporarily abandon his human identity to become a satyr. The two tasks of satyrs on vases – that is, to make people happy through the vision of Dionysos and to dismember the grape for the birth of wine (i.e. Dionysos) – are equivalent with their role as initiators.

The ability of the satyr to see or to make seen recalls that which has been observed about the cup of the Kallis Painter and the eye motif introduced at the same time on cups by Exekias: the problem (expressed during the same years – approximately 540 B.C. – by tragic poets as well) that looking is not the same as seeing. But, in order to see the whole truth, the intercession of Dionysos is needed, whether through the mediation of wine (consumed in the correct way and in the proper amount out of a cup in the intimate setting of the *symposion*)³¹⁷ or, later on, through the participation in the *komos* that has become a *thiasos*. Thus, the figure of the satyr as presented by vase painters points to the much discussed phenomenon of Bacchic initiations.³¹⁸

Assonance can also be hypothesized between the satyr of Satyr Plays and what we know and can intuit about Bacchic initiations, the *thiasos* about which literary sources speak: and not only because the satyr frequently makes the gesture of the *skopeuma* when he is stupefied by its sight and transmits his stupefaction to the spectator.³¹⁹ The male spectator's identification with the satyr should, therefore, come about through Satyr Plays as well. This was a collective experience, however, that referred to the beginning of the process of civilization – at the time of the heroes, when events occurred that gave origin to the present world. In order for mythic events to maintain their validity and good effects, they must be periodically re-proposed through ritual. The meaning of Satyr Plays, which were no less part than the other theatrical genres of a festive liturgy, was, therefore, to put forth anew variations of that initial period that potentially held all that would be derived down to the present.

The satyrs on stage, as well as the satyrs on vases, indicate the way to approach Dionysos, and (through Dionysos) happiness. This happiness could be individual: momentary at the *symposion*, perennial in Bacchic mysteries. It could also be offered by a cosmos that, in the sign of Dionysos, had reached equilibrium and of which the ideal *polis* was a reflection. In fact, was it not Dionysos in the Gigantomachy, in the story of Hephaistos, and, especially, on the occasion of the wedding of Thetis, who had re-established the order of Zeus and guaranteed its perpetuation?

³¹⁷ Dionysos 2001, 179 ff.

³¹⁸ BURKERT 1987 *passim*.

³¹⁹ VOELKE 2001, 384 ff., revisits SEAFORD's proposals and adds new arguments in favor of a link between Satyr Plays and Bacchic initiations. By doing this, VOELKE justly highlights the fact that this link should be understood in a more structural sense than in terms of historical origin (p. 30).

The relief procured by the satyrs of Satyr Plays stemmed from the fact, then, that they evoked Dionysos, the great peace-maker.³²⁰

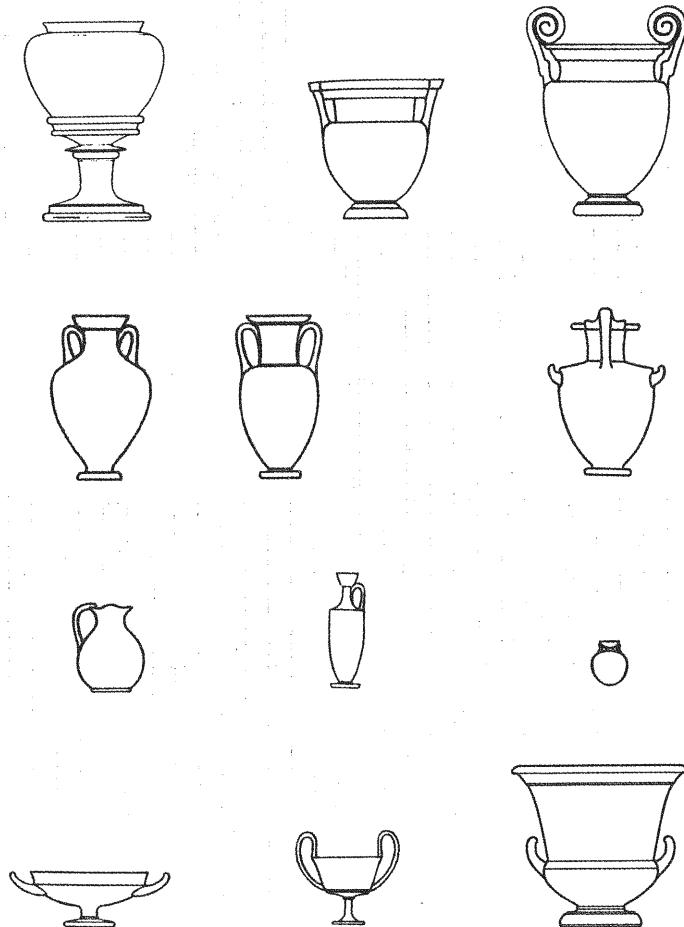
The common religious value, moreover the role of initiators, of satyrs of the theater and vase painting is now difficult to contest. However, more than the satyrs of the theater, those of vase painting transmit a reflection on the intrinsic violence of masculine sexuality:³²¹ that, as the cosmic course proceeds from wilderness to civilization, gradually becomes checked, tamed, and sublimated in order to produce the maximum benefits conceded to human-kind: music, wine, amorous play, and Bacchic experience. Satyrs are not only useful but also necessary. The world cannot do without them: they are as irreplaceable to Dionysos as they are to the *polis*.³²² They embody and visually present in the most immediate way possible the implicit and indelible contradiction of the masculine condition – which for the Greeks was equal to the condition of the citizen: to have both a weapon within their body and an *aulós* to their mouth.

³²⁰ Satyr Plays work, then, in the same way as tragedies, Cfr. BRELICH 1965, 91: “La tragedia antica, a differenza di quella moderna, non finisce necessariamente male; ma ... dalla catastrofe emerge l'esaltazione di un'armonia che scaturisce dalla saggezza e dalla venerazione degli dei.“ Thus, they are not only „a spectacle of evasion“: (DI MARCO 2000, 39).

³²¹ The sexuality of satyrs is therefore to be understood as the masculine manifestation of human violence. For a different, „gendered“, interpretation cfr. HALL 1998.

³²² Such a reflection would fit very well to the views of Solon. On Dionysos and Solon: ISLER-KERÉNYI 1993 and Dionysos 2001, 224 f.

SHAPES OF VASES



First row (from left to right): *dinos*, *column-krater*, *volute-krater*

Second row : *amphora*, *neck-amphora*, *hydria*

Third row: *oinochoe*, *lekythos*, *aryballos*

Forth row: *kylix* (cup), *kantharos*, *kalyx-krater*

FIGURES
(with sources of drawings)

1. Formerly Berlin 31573: Dionysos 2001, 37 fig. 5
2. Brindisi 1669: AMMG 1964, 121 fig. 3
3. Athens, Agorà P 334: Dionysos 2001, 107 fig. 34
4. Buffalo NY, Albright-Knox Gallery G 600: Dionysos 2001, 108 figs. 35 f.
5. Istanbul 4514: BAKIR 1981, plate 35 fig. 66
6. London B 103.16: AM 59, 1934 plate 10
7. Unknown museum : JHS 25, 1905 plate 6.3
8. Collection A. S. Richter USA: Dionysos 2001, 109 fig. 37
9. Cortona, Museo archeologico: SE 40, 1972, plate 64
10. Florence 4209: FR, plate 11
11. Berlin V.I. 4509: Dionysos 2001, 72 figs. 16 f. and photographs of the museum
12. Athens, National Museum 938: Dionysos 2001, 75 fig. 22
13. Munich 6010: Dionysos 2001, 76 f. figs. 24 f.
14. Berlin 3366: Dionysos 2001, 77 fig. 26
15. Harvard 1925.30.133: BRIJDER 1983, plate 5d
16. New York 26.49: Dionysos 2001, 216 fig. 122
17. Munich 1447: Kunst der Schale, 374, 67.1
18. Basle L 21: Dionysos 2001, 147 fig. 46
19. Louvre Cp 10634: Dionysos 2001, 154 fig. 61
20. London 1848.6-19.5: Dionysos 2001, 155 fig. 63
21. Basle BS 424: CVA Basel 1, plate 28
22. Munich 1394: Dionysos 2001, 148 fig. 49
23. Munich 1394: Dionysos 2001, 149 fig. 50
24. Louvre F 32: Dionysos 2001, 148 fig. 48
25. Orvieto, Museo Civico 240: MOMMSEN 1975, plate 103
26. Oxford 1920.107: SHAPIRO 1995, plate 75c-d
27. New York 31.11.11: TIVERIOS 1976, plate 54
28. New York 31.11.11: TIVERIOS 1976, plate 53
29. Louvre E 860: photographs of the museum
30. Würzburg Ha 166a: Cité des images, 134 f. fig. 188
31. Rhodos 15430: Clara Rhodos 8, 118 fig. 106
32. Samos K 898: KREUZER 1998, plate 8,29b; BEAZLEY 1986, plate 56,1.2
33. Basle Kä 420: Dionysos 2001, 157 fig. 68
34. Würzburg 265: SIMON 1976, plate 68
35. Naples Stg. 172: photographs od the museum
36. Boston 63.952: CARPENTER 1986, plate 21

37. Munich 1562: *Kunst der Schale*, 330, 56.7 + 358, 62.4 + 411, 74.1
38. Boston 01.8052: MOMMSEN 1975, plate 114
39. Munich 8908: *Kunst der Schale*, 148, 23.2
40. New York 16.72: RICHTER-HALL 1936, plate 67
41. Louvre C 10761: Monuments Piot 58, 1972, 32 plate IV and 28 fig. 1
42. Athens, Agorà P 24114: BCH 87, 1963, 513 fig. 5

ABBREVIATIONS

For ancient authors see: H. G. Liddell / R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon. Oxford 1940, xvi ff.

- **ABV:** J. D. Beazley, Attic Black-figure Vase-Painters. Oxford 1956
- **ADDENDA:** Beazley Addenda. Additional References to ABV, ARV² & Paralipomena, compiled by T. H. Carpenter. Oxford 1989
- **AION:** Annali di archeologia e storia antica dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale Napoli
- **AJA:** American Journal of Archaeology
- **AM:** Athenische Mitteilungen
- **AMMG:** Atti e Memorie della Società Magna Grecia
- **AntK:** Antike Kunst
- **BABesch:** Bulletin Antieke Beschaving. Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology
- **BCH:** Bulletin de correspondence hellénique
- **Cité des images:** C. Bérard / J.-P. Vernant (eds.), *La cité des images*. Lausanne 1984
- **CQ:** Classical Quarterly
- **CVA:** Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum
- **DA:** Dialoghi di archeologia
- **Dionysos 2001:** C. Isler-Kerényi, Dionysos nella Grecia arcaica. Il contributo delle immagini. Pisa-Roma 2001
- **EAA:** Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale. Roma
- **FR:** A. Furtwängler / K. Reichhold, Griechische Vasenmalerei. München 1904-1932
- **JDAI:** Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
- **JHS:** Journal of Hellenic Studies
- **JRA:** Journal of Roman Archaeology
- **Kunst der Schale:** K. Vierneisel / B. Kaeser (eds.), *Kunst der Schale, Kultur des Trinkens*. München 1990
- **LIMC:** Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae. Zürich-München
- **NAC:** Quaderni Ticinesi di Numismatica e Antichità classiche
- **Para:** J. D. Beazley, Paralipomena. Oxford 1971
- **PP:** La parola del passato
- **REA:** Revue des études anciennes
- **Satyrspiel:** R. Krumeich / N. Pechstein / B. Seidensticker, *Das griechische Satyrspiel*. Darmstadt 1999
- **SE:** Studi etruschi

- **SMSR:** Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni
- **Veder greco:** „Veder greco“. Le necropoli di Agrigento (catalogue of the exposition). Roma 1988

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INDICES

Vases in museums

- Athens, Agorà P 334: 11 n. 27, *Fig. 3*
 Athens, Agorà AP 1044: 74 n. 229
 Athens, Agorà P 24114: *Fig. 42*
 Athens, Kerameikos 25 (formerly): 27 n. 80
 Athens, National Museum 664: 17 n. 42; 22 n. 61; 47 n. 137
 Athens, National Museum 938: 29 n. 84, *Fig. 12*
 Baltimore 48.11: 40 n. 117
 Basle BS 424: 39 n. 113, *Fig. 21*
 Basle BS 495: 49 n. 149
 Basle Kä 420: 27 n. 80; 67 n. 203, *Fig. 33*
 Basle L 21: 36 n. 100, *Fig. 18*
 Berlin 1732: 37 n. 102
 Berlin 1690: 27 n. 80
 Berlin 3210 (formerly): 64 n. 192; 66 n. 199 and 202
 Berlin 3366: 30 n. 87, *Fig. 14*
 Berlin 31573 (formerly): 8 n. 20, *Fig. 1*
 Berlin F 2052: 78 n. 245
 Berlin V.I. 4509: 27 n. 79, *Fig. 11*
 Boston 01.8052: 76 n. 239, *Fig. 38*
 Boston 01.8053: 40 n. 117
 Boston 63.952: 58 n. 174; 75 n. 234, *Fig. 36*
 Bowdoin 15.44: 56 n. 169
 Brindisi 1669: 9 n. 21, *Fig. 2*
 Buffalo NY G 600: 13 n. 31, *Fig. 4*
 Cerveteri: 79 n. 247
 Christchurch (New Zealand) CUC 42/57: 56 n. 169
 Christchurch (New Zealand) CUC 41/57: 61 n. 185
 Copenhagen, National Museum 5179: 41 n. 119; 54 n. 162; 69 n. 209
 Copenhagen, National Museum Chr.VIII (57): 32 n. 93; 78 n. 244; 79 n. 247
 Cortona, Museo archeologico: 17 n. 44, *Fig. 9*
 Florence 3809: 56 n. 168; 58 n. 176
 Florence 4209: 19 n. 45, *Fig. 10*
 Florence 70995: 37 n. 106
 Harvard 1925.30.133: 31, n. 88, *Fig. 15*
 Istanbul 4514: 14 n. 34, *Fig. 5*
 Lausanne, Empiricos Collection: 64 n. 193
 London 1848.6-19.5: 39 n. 11; 89 n. 287, *Fig. 20*
 London 1971.11-1.1: 14 n. 35

- London B 103.16: 16 n. 39, *Fig. 6*
Munich 1394: 42 n. 120, *Figs. 22 and 23*
Munich 1447: 35 n. 98, *Fig. 17*
Munich 1562: 76 n. 238, *Fig. 37*
Munich 2044: 70 n. 218
Munich 2212: 64 n. 192
Munich 6010 (419): 29 n. 85, *Fig. 13*
Munich 8908: *Fig. 39*
Naples Stg.172: 71 n. 219, *Fig. 35*
New York 16.72: *Fig. 40*
New York 17.230.5: 56 n. 168
New York 1997.388: 52 n. 159
New York 26.49: 32 n. 95, *Fig. 16*
New York 26.60.29: 48 n. 141
New York 31.11.11: 38 n. 108; 52 n. 159, *Figs. 27 and 28*
New York 62.11.11: 27 n. 80
Nikosia C 440: 37 n. 105
Orvieto, Museo Civico 240: 43 n. 126; 94 n. 316, *Fig. 25*
Oxford 1920.107 : 48 n. 144, *Fig. 26*
Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 206 : 37 n. 105
Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 222 : 69 n. 208
Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 320 : 78 n. 243
Paris, Louvre Cp 10634 : 38 n. 109 ; 55 n. 165, *Fig. 19*
Paris, Louvre C 10761 : *Fig. 41*
Paris, Louvre E 733 bis : 49 n. 149
Paris, Louvre E 876 : 32 n. 94 ; 56 n. 169
Paris, Louvre E 860 : 31 n. 92 ; 56 n. 169 ; 57 n. 170 ; 79 n. 247, *Fig. 29*
Paris, Louvre F 3 : 56 n. 169
Paris, Louvre F 32 : 42 n. 124, *Fig. 24*
Paris, Louvre F 36 : 27 n. 80
Paris, Louvre F 351 : 48 n. 141
Private Collection USA: 16 n. 41, *Fig. 8*
Rhodes 15430: 61 n. 185, *Fig. 31*
Rome, Villa Giulia 2609: 58 n. 174; 75 n. 234
Samos K 898: 64 n. 194, *Fig. 32*
St.Petersburg 1524 (209): 56 n. 169
Vatican, Collezione Guglielmi 39518: 89 n. 287
Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 17743: 66 n. 201
Würzburg Ha 166a: 56 n. 169; 59 n. 179, *Fig. 30*
Würzburg 208: 75 n. 236
Würzburg 222: 47 n. 141
Würzburg 265: 54 n. 162; 64 n. 190; 67 n. 203; 68 n. 206, *Fig. 34*

Vases according to Beazley's lists**ABV**

- 10 (2.3): 14 n. 33
30.4: 29 n. 84
135.42: 42 n. 120
138.5: 49 n. 149
297.12: 56 n. 169
297.13: 56 n. 169

ADDENDA

- 3 (12.22): 13 n. 31
7 (23): 11 n. 27
8 (30.6): 29 n. 85
9 (34.2 below): 31 n. 88
10 (40.16 bis): 14 n. 35
11 (42.37): 14 n. 34
17 (64.24): 41 n. 119; 54 n. 162; 69 n. 209
21 (76.1): 19 n. 45
22 (81.1 below): 35 n. 98
23 (83.4): 32 n. 95
24 (89.2): 48 n. 144
24 (90.1): 32 n. 94; 56 n. 169
27 (103.111): 31 n. 92; 56 n. 169
29 (108.5): 38 n. 108; 52 n. 159
30 (109.27): 37 n. 105
30 (109.28): 37 n. 105
30 (109.29): 39 n. 111; 89 n. 287
30 (110.31): 38 n. 109; 55 n. 165
30 (110.32): 37 n. 106
30 (110.37): 37 n. 102
35 (133.7 bis): 56 n. 169
40 (145.19): 74 n. 229
41 (146.21): 70 n. 218
41 (147): 75 n. 234
42 (150.1): 89 n. 287
42 (150.6): 27 n. 80
42 (151.11): 27 n. 80
43 (151 Para 65): 27 n. 80; 67 n. 203
43 (151): 67 n. 203
43 (151.21): 66 n. 199 and 202
43 (151.22): 54 n. 162; 64 n. 192; 67 n. 203; 68 n. 206
43 (151.23): 64 n. 193

- 43 (152.25): 69 n. 208
45 (155 Para 66): 27 n. 80
45 (155.61): 27 n. 80
51 (188.1 below): 56 n. 168
53 (198.1): 61 n. 185
55 (203.1): 71 n. 219
62 (242.35): 76 n. 239
63 (245.69): 40 n. 117
63 (246.72): 40 n. 117
63 (246.73): 43 n. 126; 94 n. 316
81 (306.31 bis): 61 n. 185
84 (310): 56 n. 169
101 (384.17): 48 n. 141
102 (389): 78 n. 243
105 (405.20): 48 n. 141
150 (6.1): 85 n. 267
150 (7.2): 85 n. 267
151 (11.2): 85 n. 267
151 (9.2): 85 n. 266
155 (23.2): 85 n. 267
166 (64.105): 88 n. 282
166 (64.96): 88 n. 282
166 (67.8): 85 n. 266
166 (70.3): 86 n. 269
172 (104.5): 79 n. 249
176 (126.23): 85 n. 267
186 (183.7): 86 n. 268
187 (183.11): 86 n. 269
187 (185.31): 86 n. 267
190 (196.1): 86 n. 268
190 (197.9): 86 n. 268
192 (201.70): 86 n. 271
201 (240.44): 87 n. 278
202 (248.2): 86 n. 273
205 (266.84): 86 n. 270
207 (273.22): 87 n. 277
208 (279.7): 87 n. 277
208 (281.34): 87 n. 278
208 (283.2): 86 n. 267
209 (285.2): 96 n. 272; 87 n. 278
233 (413.24): 87 n. 277
252 (512.8): 88 n. 284
253 (516.2): 86 n. 273

254 (531.29): 97 n. 278
257 (551.14): 86 n. 273
261 (568.35): 88 n. 284
263 (584.21): 86 n. 267

ARV

56.26: 85 n. 266
67.2: 85 n. 266
67.7: 85 n. 266
68.10: 85 n. 267
76.81: 88 n. 282
84.18 ter: 85 n. 267
213.239: 86 n. 269
232.1: 64 n. 195; 87 n. 277
234.6: 87 n. 277
237.11: 88 n. 284
242.78: 87 n. 280
262.37: 86 n. 272
276.80: 86 n. 269
281.30: 87 n. 281
285.7: 87 n. 280
286.10: 87 n. 280
286.18: 87 n. 280
286.21: 86 n. 272
296.2: 86 n. 267
416.9: 88 n. 282
511: 88 n. 284
518.4: 87 n. 281
524.25: 87 n. 281
525.44: 86 n. 267
525.44: 87 n. 277
527.80: 86 n. 272
531.33: 86 n. 272
543.45: 88 n. 284
563.4: 87 n. 281
568.36: 87 n. 277

Para

187.3: 49 n. 149
38 (102.97): 32 n. 93; 78 n. 244

General

not listed here:

Dionysos, satyr, thiasos

- Achilles 25
- acrobat 64, 75
- Affecter 40, 43, 54, 94
- aggression, aggressive 8-10, 12-15, 25, 27, 61, 63, 84
- agorà* 11
- Alkimachos Painter 86 n. 272, 87 n. 278
- Amasis Painter 17, 27, 36, 37, 63-70, 74, 89
- Amazon, Amazonomachy 62 n. 185
- ambush 25
- amorous s. love
- ampelos* 71
- amphora* 17, 35, 37-40, 42, 44, 47-49, 51, 57, 60, 64-66, 68-70, 76-79, 85, 94, 97
- Angel Painter 87 n. 277, n. 278, n. 281
- animal, animal friezes 7-10, 12-14, 18, 26, 27, 48, 50, 52, 55-57, 59, 65, 74, 75, 88, 91
- Anthesteria 80
- Aphrodite 20, 42, 48
- Apollo 20, 21
- apostrophé* 54, 41 n. 114, 94 n. 208
- apotheosis* 75
- archon*, archonship 23
- Ares 19, 20, 36, 38
- Ariadne 40, 76, 77
- Artemis 14, 20
- aryballos* 9-12, 17, 28, 31, 33, 97
- Athena 20
- Athens 4, 11, 17, 21-23, 28, 37, 47, 50, 73, 74, 79-81, 83, 84
- athlete, athletic 66, 86, 92
- Attica, Attic 5, 22, 31, 47, 79, 80
- aulós* 16, 19, 24, 29, 42, 52, 67, 68, 77, 86, 96
- Bacchic, bacchant 45, 71-73, 78, 81, 82, 86, 95, 96
- banquet, banqueter s. *symposion*
- basket 75, 77, 87
- bastard 25
- battle 7, 10, 37, 61, 74, 93
- beard 8, 11, 28, 75
- Berlin Painter 86 n. 268, n. 269, n. 27
- bird 10
- birth, rebirth 21, 50, 55, 73, 94, 95
- blind, blindness 36, 73
- boar 61
- Boar Painter 87 n. 281
- Boeotia 28, 30-32
- bondage 92
- bride, bridegroom 20, 40-42, 47, 48, 53, 63, 64, 66
- Brygos 85
- bull, taurine 10, 61, 74,
- burial, tomb 1, 9, 10, 19, 87
- calendar 21, 50
- Calydon, Calydonian 12
- castanet 77
- Cerveteri 79 n. 247
- Chairippus Painter 88 n. 284
- Chalcidian 47
- child 20, 23, 24, 37, 50, 60, 72, 75, 89, 91
- chiton* 14, 52
- Chiusi 19

- chora*, countryside, farmland, landscape 23-25, 49, 55, 70, 80, 83, 89, 93
 chorus 58, 91, 92
 citizen, citizenship 1, 4, 5, 8, 23, 24, 50, 66, 80, 81, 84, 85, 94, 96
 city, city-state 23-26, 27, 28, 50, 51, 55, 70, 80, 83, 89
 Cleveland Painter 86 n. 273, 87 n. 281
 colony 23
 comedy, comic 20, 27
 cooking 87
 Corinth, Corinthian 7, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, 31, 42, 47
 Cortona 17
 cosmos, cosmic 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 44, 83, 95, 96
 country s. *chora*
 courtesan 66
 craft, craftsman 22-24
 crown 10, 57
 culture, civilization, civilized life 1, 5, 18, 22, 24, 25, 27, 55, 69-71, 80, 81, 83, 90, 95, 96
 cup see *kylix*
 Cycladic 7
 Cyclops 91
 dance, dancer, dancing 2, 5, 7-9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 27-33, 35-40, 42, 52, 53, 56-60, 62, 64, 66, 67, 69, 71, 75, 77-80, 82, 84, 86, 89, 92
 daughter 14, 25, 26, 50
 death 1, 44, 55, 72-76, 78, 79, 83, 86
 deceit 92
 Demeter 69
dinos 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 22, 25, 29, 32, 44, 59, 60, 64, 69, 97
 dismember 40, 55, 82, 94, 95
 dog 10, 60, 65
 Dokimasia Painter 87, n. 277
 dolphin 70
 Doros 2
 drama 28, 91
 Duris 85
 emigration 23
 ephebe, ephebic 48, 49, 51, 65, 66
 Epiktetos 85, 86 n. 269, 88 n. 282
 epiphany 35, 36, 38-40, 44, 54
 episema, emblem 10, 61
 Ergotimos 19, 51
 Eros, erotic 10, 11, 13, 14, 31, 37, 39, 40, 53, 57, 66, 67, 69, 75, 77, 78, 83, see homoerotic escape 21, 24, 81
 Etruria, Etruscan 3, 19, 31, 79
 Eucharides Painter 64 n. 195, 87 n. 277
 Euripides 91
 Exekias 36, 63, 70, 71, 74, 75, 78
 family 19, 20, 22, 50, 60, 81
 farm, farmer, farmland 24, 55, 70, 83, 92, 93 s. *chora*
 fertility 24
 festival, festive 21, 50, 79, 83, 95
 fire 22, 24, 92
 fish, fisherman 92
 Florence Painter 88 n. 284
 fountain 25, 87
 François vase 2, 4, 15, 17, 19-26, 42, 44, 47, 48, 52, 74
 funeral, funerary 7, 9, 11, 13
 Gamelion 50
 Geometric 7

- Geras Painter 86 n. 272, n. 278, 87 n. 280
 Giant, Gigantomachy 20, 36, 86, 95
 Glaukos 92 n. 204
 goat 10, 50, 51 n. 156, 64 n. 195
 Goettingen Painter 87 n. 277
 Gorgon Painter 12
gorgoneion 78
 grain 69
 grape 5, 38, 40, 52, 55, 57, 59, 68-77, 80, 82, 83, 90, 94
 Greece, Greek 1-4, 7, 10, 27, 96
 greeting 36, 38, 42, 67, 74, 86
 Hades 92
 happy, happiness 44, 59, 71, 74, 76, 78, 83, 85, 95
 hare, see leveret
 Harrow Painter 86 n. 269, 87 n. 277
 harvest 68, 76, 80, 82
 Hebe 14
 Heidelberg Painter 41
 Hellenistic 51
 helmet 65
 Hephaistos 5, 17-19, 20, 23-27, 42, 47-51, 54, 57, 58, 60-63, 78, 81, 86, 88, 94, 95
 Hera 19, 20, 47, 49
 Heraion 64
 Herakles 36, 47, 74, 94
 herm 87
 Hermes 20, 40, 41, 59, 60, 64 n. 195, 74
 Hermonax 88 n. 282
 hero, heroic 5, 74, 91-94
 Hesiod 2, 76 n. 237
 homeland 23
 Homer, homeric 2, 22, 23
 homoerotic, homosexual 29, 37, 64, 69
 hoplit 10
 horn, drinking horn 50, 55, 60
 horse, equine 9, 24, 28, 29, 50, 71
 hunt, hunter 66, 92
 hydria 97
 Ikarios 41 n. 118, 70
 inebriation 81
 initiation, initiatory 5, 45, 66, 71, 75, 78, 81, 90, 96
 integration 24, 50, 51, 80, 88
 invention 23, 73, 87, 92, 93
 Io 92 n. 304
 Ionian 47
 Italy 80
 ivy 52, 55, 59, 69, 75, 76
 jug 10, 13, 59
 Kaineus 62 n. 185
 Kallis Painter 71, 95
kantharos 17, 29, 32, 35, 55, 57, 68, 69, 71, 72, 75, 81 n. 256, 97
karchesion 17, 26
 Kavala 67 n. 203
 Kirke 92 n. 204
 kiss 77
 Kleisthenes 83
 Kleitias 15, 18-20, 23-27, 43, 44, 47, 48, 51, 56, 58, 81, 88
 Kleophrades Painter 86 n. 267, n. 268, n. 269
kline 76, 87
 Kolchos 37 n. 102
komos, komast 28, 31 n. 89, 59 n. 178, 60, 62, 64, 67, 68, 79, 80, 95
krater 8, 12, 17-20, 25-27, 35, 38, 39, 51, 52, 54-56, 58, 60, 74, 78, 85, 88, 97

- Kyknos 21, 36
kylinx, cup 31, 41, 44, 60, 64, 71, 73-78, 81, 85, 93, 95, 97
kyrios 23
- Laconian 47
lekythos 13, 14, 24, 63 n. 187, 97
 Lenaea 80
 Leningrad Painter 87 n. 280, n. 281, 88 n. 284
 leveret, hare 10
 Lewis Painter 87 n. 280
 lion 10, 74
 Little-master 64 n. 192
 love, amorous 1, 64, 66, 92, 96
 Lydos 15, 17, 36-40, 44, 48, 51-58, 64, 69, 73, 81, 89
 Lykurgos 86
 lyre 59, 86
- maenad 86
 Makron 85
 mask, frontal face 31, 32, 39, 43, 51, 53, 56 n. 168, 57, 69, 77, 85, 93
 masturbate 29, 32
 matrimony 67
 matron 40, 48, 64, 71
 medaillon, tondo 85, 93
 Medea 92 n. 204
 Mediterranean 1, 7
 Messapic 9
 messenger 92
metamorphosis, transformation 5, 33, 40, 44, 60, 73, 74, 90
 military 11, 66, 74
 miracle, miraculous 21, 92-94
 monkey 5, 72, 75, 83
 mother 19, 20, 70, 71
 mule 5, 13, 19, 24, 25, 31, 36, 40, 42, 47-61, 63, 64, 70, 75, 77-80, 88, 89, 93
- music, musician 18, 24, 26, 29, 30, 41, 52, 60, 77, 89, 92, 96
 must 67
 Myson 87 n. 278, n. 280
 mystery 73
 myth, mythology, mythic 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 36, 39, 43, 48, 51, 53, 56, 58, 61-63, 66, 70, 74, 77, 79-81, 83, 86, 88, 93-95
- nature 24, 55, 69, 70, 81, 90
 Naukratis 16
 Near East 7
 Nearchos 32
 Nikosthenes 85, 86 n. 267
nothos 25
 nude 48, 64, 66
 nuptial 40, 42, 66
 nymph 2, 3 n. 9, 4, 12-15, 18, 20, 25, 26, 35, 38-40, 42, 52, 53, 55, 59, 60, 64, 66, 67, 71, 73-75, 77, 84-86
- oikos* 23, 66
oinochoe 13, 97
 Oltos 85 n. 266, n. 267, 88 n. 282
 Olympus, Olympic 14, 19, 20, 22, 26, 37, 58, 63, 74, 78, 81
 Onesimos 85
 Orchard Painter 86 n. 267, n. 272, 87 n. 277, n. 281
 Orientalizing 7
 Orpheus 86
 Oschophoria 80
- painter, vase painter 2, 4, 5, 12-, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 26, 30, 36, 37, 48, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 63, 65, 66, 70, 79, 80, 83, 85, 87-90, 94, 95
 palace 92

- Pamphaios 85
 Panathenaic 48, 49, 51
 Pandora 92
 Painter of Bologna 228 88 n.
 284
 Painter of Louvre G 238 86 n.
 267
 Painter of Louvre G 265 88 n.
 282
 Painter of the Winged Angel 87
 n. 280
 Pan Painter 86 n. 273, 87 n.
 280
 peace 19, 20, 23, 24, 81, 96
 Peisistratos, Peisistratid 5, 37,
 70, 79, 81, 83
 Peleus 19
 Pentheus 86
 phallus, phallic, ithyphallic 2,
 10, 12-14, 16, 17, 26, 29, 31,
 38, 39, 51, 64, 66, 77, 78
 Phintias 85 n. 267
 Pindar 71
 pitcher 60, 68, 80
pithos 68
 plate 85
 play 16, 19, 24, 29, 52, 60, 64,
 67-69, 75, 77, 93, 96
 Plutarchos 23
 poison 81
polis 3, 5, 12, 18, 21-26, 44, 49-
 51, 62, 63, 66, 80, 81, 83, 89,
 92, 94-96
 Polyxena 25
 potter, pottery 1-3, 7, 9, 11, 12,
 15, 22, 24, 26-28, 31, 33, 34
 Pratinas 83, 84
 priest 12
 primordial 62, 83, 87
 procession 4, 5, 7, 17-20, 24,
 25, 43, 48, 52-55, 74, 79, 82
 Prometheus, Prometheian 22
 Proteus 92 n. 204
 Protoattic 7, 8, 12
 Protocorinthian 9, 11, 12
 protome 10, 61
 Psiax 85 n. 266, n. 267
psykter 39
pyxides 85
 queen 19, 20, 22
 ram 50
 reconciliation 20, 24, 26
 refugee 23, 24
 religion 3, 83
 revelry 89
 Rhodes 51
 ritual 5, 12, 13, 28-30, 44, 48-
 51, 53, 55, 58, 61-64, 67, 68,
 73, 80-82, 95
 rock 75
 rosette 8
 rural s. farm, farmland
 sacrifice 22, 55, 79, 87
 Samos 64, 66
 Satyr Play 3-5, 33, 64, 67, 83,
 84, 86-88, 90-96
 sea 59
 seat, seated 58, 59, 64, 75, 76
 Semele 71, 72, 75, 94
 servant, servile 87, 88, 91
 sexual, sexuality 3, 11, 13, 15,
 18, 24, 25, 27, 32, 37, 40, 52,
 56, 61, 66, 69, 82, 84, 89, 92, 96
 shield 10, 61
 ship 59, 70
 Siana 31, 41
 silen, Silenus 2, 3 n. 9, 19, 92
 n. 300
 skin 17, 52, 59, 65
skopeuma 36, 54, 86, 92, 95
 Skythes 85 n. 267
 slave, slavery 91, 92
 smith 24, 92

- snake, serpent 52
Solon, Solonian 5, 22-24, 26, 37, 50, 83, 96 n.322
Sophilos 14, 16, 20, 22-25, 37, 39, 44, 56, 66, 69
sphinx 10, 11
spring 25, 74
stage 3, 83-96
stone 12
stool 57, 58
stupor 92
symposion 1, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21, 22, 26, 28, 32, 33, 36, 44, 45, 50, 55, 59, 60-62, 66, 67, 69, 70, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84-86, 90, 95
Syracuse Painter 87 n. 281
Syriskos Painter 86 n. 270, n. 272

tail 2, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 28, 29, 31, 42, 44, 50, 56 n. 169, 71
techne 69
terror 18
Thasos 81 n. 256
theater 2, 21, 27, 84, 87
Thetis 19, 95
throne 19, 20, 48, 87
Thyrrhenian 31, 57, 58, 60, 70, 78, 79
thyrsos 50 n. 154
Timiades Painter 79 n. 247
tomb, s. burial
tondo s. medaillon
tong 19
town s. city

tragedy 73, 83, 91, 93, 94
transformation s. *metamorph.*
tree 75, 76
trickery 92
tripod 12, 29, 32
Troiros, 25
Troiros Painter 86 n. 267
Troy 25, 74
truth 73, 78, 85

vine, vineyard 5, 32, 52, 55, 57-61, 63-80, 83, 87-89, 93, 94
violence, violent 5, 11-13, 15, 18, 25-27, 32, 61, 63, 74, 80, 84, 89, 93, 96
vocation 23

war, warrior 10, 19, 74, 86
water 11, 25, 68, 74, 87
weapon 13, 26, 96
wedding 19, 40, 43, 50, 53, 61, 62, 95
wife 40, 76
Wilamowitz 22
wild, wilderness 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 24, 25, 51, 52, 55, 61, 75, 81, 90, 92, 93, 96
wine, wineskin 1, 4, 5, 11, 13, 16-19, 21, 24, 26-30, 33, 39, 40, 52, 55, 56, 59, 60, 62, 63, 66-83, 85, 87, 90, 92-96
woman 1, 5, 10, 12, 14, 19, 25, 41, 43, 48, 52, 63, 67, 69, 77, 81, 84, 86

Zeus 20, 22, 37, 60, 95

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Abstract

Violence exists, it seems to be inherent in human nature, always and everywhere. It is not possible to eliminate or to hide violence permanently. How is it possible, then, to have peaceful coexistence between human beings? This problem was clearly perceived by the Greeks in the 6th century B.C. In many images painted on Greek pottery we meet the satyr, a figure embodying sexual violence, usually in the entourage of the god Dionysos. We follow the satyr from his first appearance in art until the moment when a new genre of comic drama, the Satyr Play, was introduced in Athens. The vase-paintings illustrate how a figure embodying violence relates to a god whose main characteristic was to establish peace and stability. In the view of the Greeks it was possible to integrate violence in society by allowing it to express itself in a playful and creative way.